THE INTERCOURSES

DIVINE LOVE

Christ and the Church.

OR THE

Particular BELIEVING-SOUL;

As Metaphorically expressed by account in the second Chapter of the CANTIGLES:

Opened, and Improved in Several LECTURE-SER-MONS upon that whole Chapter

Discouring, The Excellency of Christ; His beart towards his Church and particular Believers in it, under ite or their verious States and countrancer; The workings of their bearts in Communion with the With many other Goffel-Propositions of great impost to the Soule Saints.

By 7. c. D.D.

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Hic divinitus infpiratus Chrifti, & Ecclefie laude & facri ameil greiben, & Litent

connubil cecinit Sacramenta. Bernard. Hom. 1. in Cant.
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Napitarum: Mercerus in pentan ad Cant.
Neque enim unquam assentiemus ese, qui putant boc esse carmen amatorium, de filth Pharaonie à Solomore adamata. Luther.

LONDON.

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Toles amore Santles Cheifit & Beelefia figurată locuione commundat & prophetical Sobolimei et altitudire, Aug.

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LONDON.

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ration in the Christian Church have been a rethis excellent Song for the fablingence, and the Spitrocal, matter of it, is one of a roofs glother



these amount the Ameents, and a

To all those Christians, who were the Hearers of the following Sermons.

oles you were timed's forms wood about the standing to whom the front of them is due. To the standing of your form in ortunities, and what there would done

T was in a great measure for your lakes that these Discourses were at first composed. I say in a great measure, a for I in shose studies a little consulted my self also, that like the Hustandway I might eat first of my awa fruit by being able to give my self a probable account of many mysterious passages in this sacred portion of holy Writ, upon this hyporbests. That it was intended by the half Ghast for a discourse of the Lewis between God and Christs and the believing Soul, or his Church, which is but an aggregate body of such. Upon which account it is, I hat both the Jewish Dollars and sporch, and not a sew Christians, and those both content and modern, and those such as have been of highest repu-

The Epiftle

tation in the Christian Church have judged. That this excellent Song for the Sublimenes, and the Spiritual matter of it, is one of the most glorious Stars in holy Weit Admitting what I before faid, Scapure will appear ci-tions a spiritual understanding, to frustrial rate; nor consequently baye their lengt axercifed and cost. This made Nyllen. and Gregory, and Bernard and Origen, and divers others amongst the Ancients, and a multitude of modern Divines of all perfuations frend their labours Si Tealoning Withe feare of it. That Honourable person is long since entred into her Rest, who provided me breat, while I was exercised in these Studies; you were the pext favourers of them, and those to whom the fruit of them is due. To you therefore I offer them, they are made publick by fome of your importunities. Here hall the good Christian read himself in his various states, whether under the clearer and brighter manifeltations. or more cloudy, and dark withdrawings of Divine Love : from hence (hall be understand both the heart of Christ toward him under his divertified Providences, and also his own duty under rhose varieries. Here thall the Soul read Christ loving it with a love above the paffionate love of Women. Here Shall it fee it felf fet ar a Seal upon the beart, as a Seal woon the arm of bim who is the Eternal Son of the efernal Puther. In this very Chapter how pleafant mult it be to Souls afficied and toffed with Tempefts, full of troubles without, and fears within to hear Christ telling them whom his Soul lovethe often of highest repunotici

Dedicatory.

As the Lilly amongs Thorns, fo is my Beloved amongs the Dankbiers ? to read him, o. 14. calling out, Omi Dove that art in the elefts of the Rack; in the fectet place of the Stoirs, let we fee the Countomance let me hear the Kaico for freet is the voice and the Countenance is comely. Certainly it was upon no light grounds, that the Hebrem Dollans were wont to call this Song the boly of bolier and would fuffer none to undertake the expolition of it, till they had arrived at 20 years, which was the Sacerdotal agent was doubtless not that, or at least not that alone which fome fancy, which was the cause of it, viz. left they should profane it by their youthful hearts, giving it such: a wanton fenfe as Theodorns; Mobfuelta of old, or Groting and Caffalio fince have done; but upon the account of the sublimity of the matter, requiring gravet judgments, and riper heads than those of young men usually are upon which account there were feveral other postions of holy Writ, under the fame Prohibition, as the beginning and latter end of Ezekiel and Genefir. I truft that I can fay, that it was not in the pride or vanity of my hearts that I undertook the explication of fo difficult a portion of hely Writ. I pretend to no infallibility, as to the fense I have given of the several passages of it; all that I pretend to, or that any one with any modelty can pretend to, in the explication of Allegorical Scriptures, is but a probable fenfe, upon this Hypothefis, That a greater than Solomon is bere. I mean that Christ here freaketh in the perfon of Solomon, and speaketh to the believing Soul, onto the Church (made up of fuch Souls) under the notion of one whom Solomon loved :- Hay upon that Hypothesis, I have made an attempt to give the fense of the focond Chapter of that excellent Song in the following difcourfe. The Propositions which I have handled in chefe discourses

The Epifile O.

disconsist appear unto you, by mo means to fland upon the fingle foundations of the Texes in this Chapter. from whence they are reifed. If have been mittaken there, I hope yet I have taken care from plainer Scriptures, and Principles of Reafon, to fecure the truth of the Propositions discoursed; for as they shall appear to fland neither upon the wildom nor fancy of man, but upon the credit of a divine Revelation, probably here. certainly elfewhere. I must own that my studies in the explication of this excellent portion of holy Writ. have been attended with as much, if not more pleasure to my fulf than say other of my Rudies whatfor ver inche falfilling of my Ministry. Postibly some of that facisfaction profe from the delight I have had, ever fince I knew any thing of learning, to fatisfy my felf in difficulties. But I hope fomething of it also grose from the multeries of Divine Love, in the contemplation of which breas engaged, affoon as I had taken this task into my hand. Can a reasonable Soul read of him who in the eternal Son of God, bringing the Soul of his Creature into his Banquetting-house, and making his Benner over it Love; and not find it felf melved into his embraces, and cry out as the Spoule, in this Chap. Star me with Flaggons, Comfort me with Apples, for I am fick of Love ? What can be more sweet than to read of both the hands of the Prince of Peace, employed for our immortal Souls; his left hand under our head, and bis right band embracing us. To apprehend him even in the hour of his withdrawing from us; yet standing behind our wall, looking forth at the windows, and thewing himfelf through the latteffes of Afflictions, Temptations and Defertions 3 and by the eye of Faith to fee him coming leaping upon the Mountains, and shipping upon the

the Hills; and to hear him orying out, Rife up, my Love my Fair one, and come away. Oh the unspeakable pleasure that a due understanding of this facred Song must needs affect every Spiritual Christian with! how would it dispose our ears, to the most ingenious Songs that ever were composed by any creature! how often should we (even while we are lathe land of our Cape tivity) call for one of these Songs of Sion, and never hang our harps upon the willows? In this Song daly understood, a Christian may doubtles see as much of Christ as can be seen of him, on this side Heaven, while the glorious day thatt come to break, and the dark fludows which both eclipse the glory of Heaven from us, and darken our eyes as to the visions of God, shall all flee away. Such as my Meditations have been upon this excellent portion of holy Writ, they have been acceptable to you upon the hearing, and defired by you in the form you now fee them; for they are not at all varied, but the very notes I first prepared for your ears from the Pulpit. I shall leave the probability of the sense I have given to your judgments. I fay the Probability, (for that Divine arrogates too much, that will pretend to the infallible fense of an Allegorical discourse.) If my dearly Beloved friends (hall find any thing in these discourses, which may make their Beloved, and my Lord and Mafter, more dear, and pretious in their eyes : If they can find any thing, which may make them, (when the men of the world mock and flout, and cry to them, What is the Beloved more than the Beloved of another?) reply as our Spoufe doth, Chap. 5. 10. My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest of ten thousand, v. 16. His wonth is most sweet, be is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my friend, O Daughters of Hierusalem ! If they

The Epiftle, &cc.

oan find any thing which may be useful to relieve any of their Souls, when they may fancy that their Beloved is turned alide, and make them under fuch rebukes of a most wife Providence, understand either what the affections of Christ toward their Souls is, or what their hearts thould be toward him; I truft God thall have the glory of fo good an effect, and he the further advantage of their Prayers, Who is the Lords unworthy Minister, and inductiond, a Challing day donbiels for as ruch of

Chair as can by form of him, on this lide Heaven, while? wohed dub at ban Auga Tour Servant in the work of the control of the Lord file Lord Well all flee and Len or, cuffe Lord file Lord Well all flee and

Tuch as nie Medications have been upon this extra cto you upon the hearing sade third by you in the form -vou now leed how for they spenot at all varied, bintine very torest of the pared for your care tions the Poloit. I that I leave the probability of the feater have givento arrogates too much, that will pretend to the infallible. knie of an A le, oricil difourte.) It me dem , Beloved friedly that and any cling in their our softer, schielt man make them beloved and my bord and higher, more thing, which may make them, I was the menontha would move and fixed and cop to their e where is the Beloved more than the Stoved of minter? I resty us

raddle, the carefest of ten ther and, v. v. b. His month to most freet be, is altogether loyels. This is my selvened and this is my friend, O Langhters of Biere feline! It toey

The PREFACE.

he had bien me of Yeshidib an

Hat the Propositions discoursed in the following Sermons are true, will, I truft to every Reader, appear not to depend upon the concluding of them from the fense of the Text, in this Metaphorical and mifterious difcourle's but upon other plain Scriptures, and the force of Reason. by which in the following sheets they are justified: so that whether they be the truths of the Text or no, will only be confiderable, as to the workmans judgment and skill who composed them, not as to the Faith and practice of the Reader. Now for the workmans skill, though he trufts, that he hath both prayed and studied so far in the composure of them, that he might approve himself a werkmen who needeth not be ashamed; yet he cannot say that in all things be hath obtained. There are two Postulata, which he must beg of his Reader, before he leaveth these Discourses as to his judgment in that point.

1. That this Book of the Song of Solomon, is a portion of holy

Writ composed by Solomon.

2. That Solomon's scope in it, is to discourse the Spiritual intercourfes of Divine Love between Christ and bis Church, or the particular believing Soul under the Metaphor of a Lave-Song, or Dislogue betwixt two Lovers, declaring their mutual complacency, each in other, As to the first : That this is a portion of boly West, the universal Tradition of the Church, both Temile and Christian, is no light evidence. Though there was some controverly about the Book of Ecclefiafter; yet the Jews never questioned the Divine Authority of this excellent Song good manus non conquinet, wee profanne ft. becanfe of the purity of it ; nor do I find that the Divine V. Meen. Authority of it was ever questioned in the Christian Church, unless puef. in cant. by one Theodorus Mopfuefta condemned for it by a Council at Confantinoplesalthough fome of a later date, have bid fair to it in their profage making it no more than's Love-Song, betwixt Solomon and Pharaster Dangeter. But belides this; (the validity of which lingly confidered might by fome be questioned:) If we consider the Anthor who was Solomon an holy Prophet and pen-man of Scripture, of whom it is faid, the Lord loved him, 2 Sam 12. 24. (whence

he had his name of Fedidab) and whose name signifying a peacemaker, fuits the Book which begins with a kifs, the token of friendship (as Bernard observes :) Or the Title of the Book. which is the Song of Songs, fignifying (according to the Hebrew dialect,) the most excellent Song, (upon which account the Hebrews were wont to fay, Other Scriptures were holy, but this קרט סרשים The boly of bolies:) will fee reason to concur with the judgment of the universal Church, in all ages in the case. Espeefally when they confider, that not only the fense of it agrees with other Scriptures, but several particular phrases in it are else-where alfo ufed in holy Writ, Chap. 1. 2. Draw me, and I will run after thee, Job. 6. 44. No man cometh to me but he whom the Father draweth. The Spoule is here called undefiled, Chap. 5. 2. which is the fame with Saint Pauls chaft Virgin, 2. Cor. 11. 2. Belides, that fupposing the discourse to be (betwixt Christ and his Church, or the believing Soul) there is no part of Scripture, makes fuch use of all the Perfections of the creature, to fet out the excellency of Christ; nor more sweetly and fully expresseth believers Communion, and Intercourses with him. Nor to any understanding person, can the amatorious expressions occurring in this Books or the want of the Name of God, or Februab, be any just prejudice against the Divine Authority of it. Not the first, for what is more ufual than for God and Chrift both in the Old and New Testament, to express themselves under the Notion of a Bridegroom and an Husband, and the Church, or the believing Soul, under the Notion of a Bride, or a Wife? He is the Bridegroom, the the Bride, Job. 3. 29. fee Epb. 5. 28, 29, 30, 31. 2 Cor. 11. I am married to you (faith the Lord, Fer. 3. 14.) The Church is called the Lambs wife in the Revelation, &cc. Nor is the latter objection of any value for it would be of the same force (as to the name febopab) against Ecclesisses, (in all that book it is not found;) and against the Book of Eliber, as to the name of God. Nor is it true that God is not named, there being few verles in it in which the name of Christ is not mentioned, according to that Metaphorical way of expression, the use of which in this Song, it pleased the Holy Choft to dictate to this great Prophet; nor (as Merces observed) was there any reason for any other naming of God, by one who wrote all in a Spiritual figure and mistery. Not is that an invaluable reason, which is given by Sixtus Seneusis, Delrio, and others why thenames of ארוה שרי ארני אלהים אל &c. are here o

mitted as mostly fignifying the Majefty, Greatness, Glory and Power of God. Now plainly the defign of the Holy Ghoft here is to discourse of a God in Christ reconciled to the Soul and imbracing the Soul in that thate of Reconciliation with the sweetest embraces of Love. Thus the Wildom of the Holy Ghoft teacheth Solomon in Deus fefe nunc this Book, to accommodate his file and appellations of God, to the pafforem, nunc Subject of his discourse, and suiteth the Attributes or Names of fattern, or ani-God in this Song both to the flate of a believing Soul, and also to Sponfum nomi the sweetness of Gospel-revelations. Ask what God was under the nat greenitu, Law and Covenant of works; there his name was Febovah, the non absque my-Lord, the LordGod, the Mighty God : ask what he is under the illis nomini-Golpel; He is a Father, a Beloved, a Bridegroom, a Shepherd, & bus, quibus in-Friend : Dominum queris, fratrem andi, (faith Delrio) do you look comprebensibifor the name of Lord, hear the name of Brother, Friend, Bride lis Illa Majegroom: and it is no more than Gregorius magnus long fince in his Protogue to his notes upon this Book observed. Quando vult ti- nibus circummeri dominum, quando vult bonorari patrem, quando amari foonfam fe feribi confutuenominat Dominus, Our God requiring himself to be feared, calls rat. Sixtus Sehimself the Lord; requiring to be honoured, calls himself a Father; conf. ber. 8. requiring to be loved, he calls himfelf our Bridgeroom.

Nor is the Objection of some worth any thing, who would difoute the Authority of this facred Book; because (as they pretend) it is not quoted in the New Testamener for besides, that the thing is falle, (as I before hinted) there being feveral expressions in the new Testament plainly borrowed from this Sough if this Argument were of value it were of equal force against the Book of Judges, Ruth the two Books of Samuel the two Books of Chronicles the Book of Ecclefiaftes, and divers of the smaller Prophets, (whose

Divine Authority were never questioned.)

But supposing the Book of Divine Authority, and part of the Asser Zaxin facred Canon, yet concerning the nature of the matter Divines mer Al serare not agreed. The afferting it a piece of holy Writ, deliver with the thirty is a set it from their notion, who would make the nature of it to be refusered. meerly an bistorical Love-Song, betwixt Solomon and Phoraeby angle xeed Daughter, or Abifag the Shunamites for which they have no other sages 2006grounds, than those expressions, Cant. 1. 9. & Chap. 6. where he ward to grounds, than those expressions, Cant. 1. 9. 8. Chap. 6. where he wa seein, & compares his Love, to a company of Horses in Pharaots Charriot, axistro and Chop. 6, 134 Return, O Shulemite ; certainly a meer Love Toresta Co-Song would never have been left upon facred record for our be state, Hom. fruition. Another Solomon (faith Nyffen) is here figuified, who win Cant.

Atrio , prifcis metu ab bomi-Action is the Land

of a hearth a

The Preface.

was also himself of the feed of David, according to the flesh, whose name is Peace, the true King of Ilrael. He here maketh ufe of Solo mon as his Infrument, and by him discourseth with us. The Fews make the matter of this Book, but an bistorical discourse of Gods mercies to and deliverance of their Nation and Church; and Interpret this whole Book of God, and the Jewish Church. There are forme, (and those very reverend Interpreters,) make this Book Prophetical: amongst these, to some of the Ancients, Aquinos. Alited Brightman and our reverend Cotton have joined themfelves, with divers others. These make it to contain a Prophety. of what should befall the Church, from Solomons time to the end of the world; but although there may be a Verfe or two in the Book. which may feem to crave a Prophetical Interpretation, as Chap. 8. 2. 8 9. vet I cannot agree to them, who make it entirely a Prophely : and indeed the many frained, barfh and groundlefs Applications of fome paffages in it, by those who would make it all a Prophely, do make me fly of agreeing with them. I do therefore agree with those Divines who make the matter of it Dodring! where the Holy Ghoft by Solomons pen fets out the near Union of the Church, and of a believing Soul with Christ, and sheir mutual Intercourfes of communion each with other. Only those Divines who are in this agreed, (amongs which are the far greater number of Divines both ancient and modern,) make some question whether this be expressed Typically, or onely Metaphorically. There are some who will yield that this Song of Love is a discourse betwint Solomon and Pharaobs Daughter, but confidered as Types of Christ and bis Church, fo as to express the Communion and Intercourses of Love between Christ and his Church or particular Believers in it, of which mind is Estins. But I do more incline to them who make this Song Allegorical, but not Typical. It is observed that Solomons marriage was twenty years before the composure of this Song ; nor is there any thing but a meer conjecture to ground their fancy upon, who would make it primarily a marriage Song, between Salomon and any Wife of his. And although indeed the difference of Ages and Countries, makes us no fitting judges of the fitness of Metaphors; yet one would think it were affrange complement to a Lady to rell how ber bead was like Month! Carmel, Chap. 7.5 and her eyes like Fift porty and her wofalike the Tower of Lebanen, and bee sent tike a flock of Shere Catte V. To. Befides, as Meres potes out of Abeneses, There are many ex-

Principaliter eft feriptus ve-Lut Epithalamium Christi & Ecclefie, fumptatamen occa-Gone à nuptiis Solomonis ; ità ut iftud Canticum principalito etiam ad literam quidem, tanquam in fieuratis & pa-Tabolitis local tionibus Ad Christum Co eccielian mus Sponfam pertinear Sec. Effin in Annotat. ad Cantico pressions which is intended to a woman, had been very unhandfome for one of us, much more Solomon, to have left upon record.

Upon these grounds, though I grant the phrase of this Book to be
very Metaphorical and Alkgorical; yet I cannot allow it to be Typical: Nor that there is any thing of an History in it, either of Gods
dealings with the Uraelites, as the Caldee Paraphrass would have it,
nor of any passages betwixt Solomon and any Queen of his, but
that it is a Marriage-Song, betwixt Christ and his Courch, or Christ
and the believing Soul, admirably expressing his love to his people,
and his peoples motions toward him, under various circumstances;
and all this under the figurative expressions of a Bridegroom and
Bride each to other.

That this Song is to be understood not of any carnal Love, ecording to the impure conceits of Theodorns, Mopfuefts, Caftalio, and Grotias, and fome few Anabaptifts, but concerning Divine and Spiritual Love, is univerfally agreed by the Fewiff Interpreters ; and amongst the Ancients by Hierom, Augustine, Origen, Theodoret, Bafil, Cyprian, Gregory Nyssen, Gregory Magnus, and the best of later Interpreters, whether Popish or Protestants, so as though it be the Song of Solomon, yet a greater than Solomon is here, another Solomon, as Nyllen calls him. Solomon (as his Father David in the Pfalms.) often doth here fpeak in the person of Chrift, the great Bridegroom of his Church. And this maketh it probable; that these were some of Solomons last words, wrote after the recovery of his Soul from his Apostacy; after he had seen the vanity of the Creature, which he largely describeth in Ecclefieffes, and had recovered a near Communion with God: Of this mind was Cwil the elder Hierom and Basteianus, and also Bernard and Delrio, wherein he seemeth a little to differ from those of his Religion, who generally think otherwise, and are obliged to do so by their hard opinion of Solomons dying in bis Apostacy. Alfted thinketh that both this Book, and that of Ecclefiaftes, were wrote not long before his death, to leave the world a testimony of his Repentance, and recovered Communion with God. I am aware of the little difforte amongst Interpreters, of the order of these three Books of Solomon, Proverbs, the Book of Ecclefiaftes, and this Song, which was wrote first or last; but it is not of that moment, that I need concern my felf in it.

The obtaining of this will conclude the matter of this Book not only bill, but, as the Jews were wont to express it, when the

Lin Cane

tica pronuntiat eltitudine (faith Augustine.) It is all frent in com-

excellentiffimum. Varablus.

prol. ad Cant.

mending the Love between Christ and his Church, and therefore Hebraifmus pro it is called שיר השירים, the Song of Songs. We must observe (faith Gregory) that it is called the Song of Songs; because it is formuch the more fublime, by how much the marriage is more fublime concerning which it treateth. Of Songs, is added, faith Greg. Mag. in Delrio, not because it is the compendium of Solomons Songs, or only one of the 5000 he composed; but according to the Hebrem Dialed, to denote the excellency, the sublimeness, and the Divinity of its as the King of Kings, fignifieth the most excellent King, the Lord of Lords, the mod eminent Lord, &c. And this (faith he) is proved, 1. Because is fang to the King of Kings. 2. Because

> As to the form of it, three things are observable; 1. It is Metal phorical or Allegorical 2. Metrical, 3. Dramatical. It is Allegorical A discourse wherein the Holy Ghost expresseth the highest di-

it containest the bighelt mysteries and benefits &c.

v. Delrio in Magog. c. 4.

> vine Mysteries, viz. The Union and Communion between Christ and believing Souls, under the ten familiar Similitudes of Marris age, &c. One while Christ compares himself to an Husband, a Bridegroom; his Church or the particular Soul, to a Spoule. a Bride: another while he compares himself to a Shepherd his Saints to Sheep, their Societies to flocks of Sheep: another while he compareth himself to an Husbandman, his Church to a Vineyard, &c. This made Bernard cry out, Here is heavenly Bread, but who shall break it? (I must not arrogate fuch a thing to my felf) do you fo exped from me [a just Interpretation of it] as if you did not exped, for I my felf am one of those that do exped (I suppose) an infallible revelation of the fenfe of it, faith be : yet the Metaphors in it are no other than what are very ordinary in Scripture. David his Father, Pfal. 45, had expressed the Love of God to his people under the same Metaphor of a Marriage: for that of an Husband-

> man, God had used it, If. 5. and Christ, Joh. 15. 2. As to the form it is Metrical, it is called a Song, and was in the Hibrem wrote in meeter, it is one of those which the Apostle calls Spiritual Songs. The writing it in this form, was most suitable to the Metaphor he chole to ule. At marriages they were wont to Sing Epithalamisime, befides that finging bath a notable vertue to influence the

The last thing observable in the form is; That it is Dramonical

Affections, and to excite Devotion.

lic panis eft eleftis quis wo franget ? on equidem sibi iftud teere arrogan. um, &c. Berrd. Hom. in Cant.

that is, a Metrical discourse, where several persons are brought in. as having their parts, and speaking in their courses. The two principal parties, are 1. A Bridegroom. 2. A Bride. 3. Bridemaid, or Virgin. 4. Watchmen, &c. By the Beloved Bridegroom, I understand the Lord Fesus Christ. By the Bride, (called sometimes Love in the abstract,) I understand the Church or truly believing Soul. To fumme up all; upon these reasons, and with this

Authority, I conclude,

That this excellent book is an admirable portion of holy Writ. wherein the Holy Ghoff made wie of Solomon, the Son of David the King of Ilrael under the Metaphor, or Allegory of a Marriage, and the intercourses of Love betwixt two newly-married persons; to fet out the great Love of Jesus Chrift to Believers, and to his Church under diversified circumstances of Providence, the excellencies of Jesus Christ, the pantings and breathing of pious Souls in feveral states after him; and the meltings of his Bowels towards them.

This being granted I shall leave it to my Readers judgment, to conclude how well plain Propositions of Truth, are collected from the Metaphorical expressions used in the second Chapter. Which whether he judgeth daly collected (as I faid at first) year or no. is not much material either as to his Faith or Practice, provided that he findeth them (which I hope he will) fufficiently founded upon, and proved by other Scripture; and for his judgment as tomy art in a due Interpretation of the Metabor here, be it as it wills only I think if at any time I have mistaken, I have proved all along.

that I have done it with no unvaluable company.

Having upon me (when I composed most of these discourses) the charge of Preaching three Sermons each week, I indeavoured to make it my bufinels to Preach once upon the Principlen of Religion, for the rooting and grounding my hearers in the Faith : Another upon plainer practical Subjects, to quicken them to the exercises of Holiness. The third I chose generally to spend in refolving some cases of Conscience, or questions in Divinity; and opening some more difficult portions of Scripture. Among which-I fell upon this excellent Song, as well that I might study it my felf to as to give a probable account of the fenle of the feveral paffages in it; as that I might give the people to whom I was as Preacher, at least a probable sense of it, so as the Propositions. hould correspond with plainer Scripture : and have advantage

from it, to discourse the excellencies of Christ, the variety of the Churches and believing Souls state, and the heart of Christ to them, as well as their duty, under the diversifications of his wise Providence. I had gone through the first Chapter, and one half of the Second, in the course of my more publick Ministry before the year 1662. The other verses have been my later work.

Thou hast here (Reader!) only my Lectures on the second Chapter: these were the labours of my riper years, and later than the former; and leaving the latest impressions upon my hearers, were by many of them importuned into a publick view, and in my own notes were readiest: I have therefore allowed them to come first, reserving those upon the first Chapter, to my own further leisure, for revisal, and transcribing, and till I should understand how acceptable these would be to an age so full of excellent Books as our present age is.

I was aware of those excellent discourses of Mr. Robotham, Dr. Guild, and Mr. Durham upon this Book, from all which I have bortowed some light, as from very many other Interpreters both ancient and modern; but the Reader will find this difference betwixt my undertaking and theirs, that here the Propositions raised from the several verses are more fully handled, opened, justified

from other Scriptures, and applied.

I heartily pray that my Reader may find so much pleasure, and profit from the reading of these discourses, as my self have found in the studying and composing of them. If they may be found to contribute any thing, to give the Reader a probable sense of the Metaphorical and mysterious expressions of this Book, and to bring the Souls of any in love with my Lord and Master, or to increase that love in them, or any way to help them in their way to Heaven, and me to any of their Prayers, it shall be an abundant recompense of my poor labours: Whose work in displaying the riches of Divine Grace in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, is an abundant wages to it self.

proming legistances of the the purious of Secretary, Amore which

The second of the second secon



Cant. 2.1.

I am the Rose of Sharon, and the Lilly of the Vallies.

Shall not concern my felf with the prophane opinion of Theadorns Mot Suelta, or Castellio, who make this excellent portion of holy Writ to be only a Lovefing betwixt Solomon and Pharaob. his Daughter, (because the spouse was compared to a company of horses in Pharaobs Charret;) or Solamon and some Shulamite, because of that passage in it; Return, O Shulamite, return. It shall fuffice me, that as Theodorus was condemned for his opinion by a Conneil, and Castellio by Caluin: So the whole Church of God both Iweish and Christian have constantly received it; The lews calling it their Holy of Holses, and the whole Christian Church acknowledging it an admirable portion of holy Writ. Augustine faith of it that it doth, Totus amores fandlos Christi et Ecclefie figurata locatione commendare; Wholly commend the facred Loves of Christ and his Church, by a figurative expression. That the form of the fong is Dramatical, or that of a Dialogue. is evident to every observant Reader. I shall not trouble you with the various Notions of Divines concerning the Persons betwist whom the Dialogue is, but join my felf to that number of them (and that is the far greatest) who understand by the Bridegroom, the Lord Jefus Christ, who Job.3. is proved to be the Bridegroom, because he hath the Bride, and who calls himself so whiles he owns his Disciples, as the Children of the Bride-Chamber, and by the Bride or Spoule, the Church and every true Believer, a member of it, called the Kings daughter, Psal. 45. (which Psalm judicious Beza prefixeth to his Notes on this Book, as being einstem prorsus argumenti, as he saith, of the same argument with it, and called the Bride, Joh. 3.29. These things being premised;

Before I can speak to the words of the Text, in the form of a Proposition, it will be reasonable I should determin who it is that

Speaks.

Devout Bernard makes thefe the Bridegroome's words, the Spoufe had faid before, Chap. 1. v. 16. Our bed is green, Ne fibi flores afcribere tillos &c. faith Bernard. To prevent the Spoules thinking. that the flowers which adorned her bed grew in her own garden. ber Bridegroom here replyes, I am the Rofe of Sharon, the Lilly of the vallies, All our fresh-springs are in Christ, all our sweer odours are from him, all our beauteous colours from him alone. The fame devout author observeth, that there is the flower of the field, the flower of the Garden, and the flower of the Bedchamber. The Graces of Christ adorning every beleeving Soul are like the flowers in Thalamo, in the bedchamber; but if there were no flowers in the field, there would be none in the Windows, none on the bed; 'tis of Christs fulnels, that we receive Grace for Grace : Nor, faith Bernard, doth Christ call himself the flower of the garden, that's planted by some other hand, but the flower of the field that comes up naturally, and is not beholden to the industry of another; and when it's come up, it is in the midft of weeds and thorns. Inherent Grace in the Saint, is flos in borto, a flower in a garden planted there by the Spirit. But Grace in Christ is flos in campo, a natural, effential thing. But I will not enlarge upon this notion, partly becaufe this Translation of the Text doth not fuit ours, though it be that which the Vulgar Lat. and Arab. follow after the Septuagint; and partly, because I think the words rather the Sponfes words than her Bridegroome's.

I shall therefore fall in with those Interpreters, who conceive these the words of the Church or of the believing Souls. Thus the Hib. interpreters generally, and those who tread most exactly in their steps. Only I observe yet a difference in the sence amongst them: I Some make them the words of the believing Soul, or of the Church commending her self, and inviting others to a Fellowship and Communion with her. 24 Others make them the words of the Church complaining of her State, as exposed to

many

many dangers and many temptations. She was as a Rofe but in a field, as a Lilly but in an open vally. Let us first understand the

terms, and agree the literal Interpretation.

א הבצרה השרון Mercer and others observe some dispute amongst the Heb. Doctors whether the word which we translate Rose fignifieth a Rose or a Lilly: A question not easily to resolve. Avenarius will have it a Lilly, Pagnine a Rofe; it is used, 16.35.1. There again our Translators translate it a Rofe; Iam the Rofe of Sharon : So we translate it. I am disos medie the flower of the field; so the Septuagint and the Vulgar Lat. and Arab. follow them. I cannot satisfie my self in the reason of that Translation. In the HeA it is Sharon. We read of Sharon oft-times in Scripture ; It appears that it was a place where herds of Cattell fed; 1 Chron. 27.29. And over the berds that fed in Sharon was Hittai the Shannite. 1 Chron. 5.16, you read of the Suburbs of Sharon. The Prophet Ilaiah, Chap. 33.9. declaring Gods judgments, faith, Sharon is a Wilderness Ila.35.2 the excellency of Sharon, and Ifa.64.10. The Prophet promiting the happy restauration of the People, faith, Sharon hall be a fold of flocks. By these places it appeareth that Sharon was a fruitful place when the Jews were wont to feed their herds. There was a Country of that name in the lot of Ephraim. Some note that it was the name both of a Mountain and of a City and of an adjacent Country; the Country very fertile; therefore the Kings cattel were fed there, as you may gather from 1 Chron.27. 29. It was called Lasharon when Jashus took it, as you may gather from 7ofb. 12.18. Iam the Role of Sharon. It appears by this Text, that as it was a place famous for pastures; so also it was famous for flowers; and amongst other flowers for Roses, it followeth.

that it bath. The Vallyes were fruitful places: probably there were places called the Vallyes were fruitful places: probably there were places called the Vallyes near to Sharon, for 1 Chron. 17.29. (wherein you have an account of Davids officers) you read, Over the berds that fed in Sharon was Shittai the Sharonite, and over the berds that were in the Vallyes, was Shaphat the son of Adlai. The sum is, There were certain fruitful places, lying about Leda and Joppe where the Kings of Israel were wont to feed their herds, they were called Sharon and the Vallyes: now these pastures were full of flowers, amongst other flowers were Roses and Eillies in plenty: To these the Church and the believing Soul compares here

Elf, I am the Rofe of Sharan, The Lilly of the Vallies. Hence the Proposition.

Prop. The believing Soul, or the Church of God, (made up of fach Souls) is like the Rose of Sharon, and the Lilly of the Vallies.

My Work is but to open this Metaphor, and make a suitable Application of it. Why doth the Spoule compare her self to the

Rofe of Sharon and the Lilly of the Vallies?

Propof.

r. They are both Flowers. He that wisely confiders a Flower, will discern it a rare piece of divine Workmanship, scarce excelled by any thing else in nature, ut coelius potius demitti quam ex terrs prodire videatur, saith Bezzs: whether you consider the unity and subtility of its matter, or the admirable contexture of its parts; the various and rare smells which come from it, or the various uses in which it serveth the Sons of men. The slower is an excellent creature. Luk 12.27. Solomon in all his glory was not like

a flower, one of these here mentioned, a Lilly.

The believing Soul is a glorious creature, that Soul that hath learned to live the life which it now lives by Faith in the fon of God. (as faint Pant speaks): I say this Soul is a glorious creature. This is the Kings daughter that is glorious within. It is true, as every Vulgar eve doth not discern the glory of the flower, not confidering the subtility of the matter, nor the contexture of the parts, (yet the most ordinary and least intelligent Persons, see the beauty and smell the sweetness of some flowers;) so every Vulgar Soul understands not the excellency of a Believer, every one feeth not the Spirituality of his life, the contexture of his Graces ; yet there' is none to whom, the sweet odour of a Gospel-Conversation arising from Faith, doth not in some measure approve it self, and who doth not in fome things understand that the righteous is better than bis neighbour. The Worldling in all his glory is not like to one of Chrifts Lillies, he lives but by bread I by the fenfitive things of this life I; but the Believing Soul liveth by the word of God, and hath that sweet joy, and peace of which the world knows nothing.

2. The Rose and the Lilly of all other stowers are accounted the most noble stowers. The Rose is inter stores specialistismus (say Naturalists) next the Rose (saith Pliny) the Lilly was accounted the most excellent. The Rose excellent, for Colour, for smell, for usefulness; The Lilly for its whiteness (though in deed they are of divers Colours) for sallness, for finits subscens. Pliny saith, one of

thofe

those dowers will have in it sometimes five hundred colours. The works of Gods hands are various, and there is an excellency in all of them, (though one Star differs from another in glory,) But amongst all the flowers which God hath planted in the Garden of his Creation, there's none like to the believing Soul; these are the Excellent of the Earth ; Rofes for fweetness, Lillies for whiteness; Roses for usefulness, Lillies for femitfulness. All the sweet smells of Heaven are in the Church of God; there is the sweet odour of Faith, fo acceptable to God, and sweet-smelling charity, fo lovely to the fons of men: There's bumility temperance meeknefs brotherly-kindness goodness, gentleness; in short whatsoever is amiable amongst the fons of men. The moral Vertuous man is a kind of flower, and hath his lovelines; but the truly Believing Christian, the true child of God, excels the faireft flower, that can grow in the garden of meer nature; as much as the Role of Sharon excelled all other Roses, or the Lilly of the Vallies other Lilles,

Thirdly. The Rose of Sharon and the Lilly of the Vallies, they are but flowers of the field; and thus I told you the Sept. and forme other Interpreters interpret this Text, Ego fum flos campi, Sharon indeed was no ordinary field, it was a glorious field, far more fruitful than the places of the wilderness; but an open field. There is a difference between the flower of the Garden (that's enclosed, protected, and defended by an ordinary hedg), and the flower of the field that's exposed to wind and weather; and (as we shall hear afterward) if a Lilly amongst thorns, Simul exponit fuem pulcrisudinem, et etiam periculi gravitatem (faith De Ponte upon that Text) as that the calls her felf, a Rofe, a Lilly, the fetteth out her Loveliness and Excellency but in that the calls her felf The Rofe of Sharan, The Lilly of the Vallies, the fignifies her danger to which the is exposed. The beleiving Soul, though a Rose, is but like a Rose in Sharon; though a Lilly is but a Lilly of the Vallier, white it is in this life, both thefe rare flowers might be trodden down and abused by the herds that sed there. The world is Sharon, It is the place of the Valleys. As God hath his flower there, So the God of the world, keeps his herds there. God hath made the prefent world a Common both for Saints and Sinners; and though as the foil of grounds is different, one part more fruitful than another; fo in the world there is a difference betwixt Sharon and the Wildernefs, those parts where the Church is, and those where Paganifin reigneth ; yet there's no place fecure from the wildbeafts

that fed here. Thus I have opened the Metaphor, and the wedyou how the Believing Soul is the Rofe of Sharon and the Lilly of the Vallies.

1. It fignifies first, the Believers beauty, glory and usefulness.

2. It fignifies the dangerous State of the Believer and of the Church in this life.

- 2. Qu. But whence is it, that the spoule is the Rose of Sharon, the Lily of the Vallies? And if she be such why doth God suffer her to be a flower of the field?
- 1. As to the first, give me leave to fay as the Apostle, What bast thou mbich thou baft not received? What foever the Soul of man is other than filth, and corruption, is all by Grace. The faireft Rofe of Sharon, was a nettle by nature, the most lovely Lilly of the Vallies was but a poisonous plant. We are perfed through Christs comelia ness put upon us, Ezek. 16.14. Pliny tells us a ftory of Lillies. that those who have attended the drefling and improving those plants have used when they first shoot up in the Spring, to pour the lees of Red-wine upon the root, and afterwards in trenches where those roots frand to pour a good quantity of that Wines which (faith he) the root to effectually drinks in, that it fends forth bloffomes and flowers perfectly of the Colour. I will not difpute the truth of that flory: But give me leave to tell you that Christ taketh much such a course to create the beautiful Rose of Sharon; He bath trodden the winepress of his Fathers wrath alone. The wine was red. Christ poureth this red-wine of his blood upon the Soul, and fo it becomes a Rofe of Sharon, a Lilly: he caufeth the Soul to imbibe this blood, and by this it brings forth the fruits of Righteousness and Holiness. Sharon naturally brings forth a beautiful Role, and the Vallies naturally produce these lovely Lillies: But it was by vertue of a fruitful juice which the God of nature had first poured out upon that foil, The Believing Soul on courfe brings forth the pleafant fruits of Rightenulnes and Holinels; but it is the God of Grace who by the Spirit of Sanctification applying the blood of Christ to the Soul, bath first created in it such a gracious disposition, Without distinguishing Gracethere would be as little a difference berwixt a Believing Soul and another asthere was bet wixt Sharon and a Wilderneft, luppoling the first to be bleffed by the great Creator with no more far, and settled dispositions than, another. He that looketh upon the natural face of the child. of

of God, and judgeth of him by the lines of that, must pronounce him, Prond and Stubborn and Vain, and foolish as another is. And the child of God hath nothing to say but (as Socrates told the Physiognomer, I was so indeed by nature, but Education hath made me otherwise) I was so till the Grace of God made me better. Even Paul himself was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and it was by Grace that he was any other, that he was what he mas: But this is a theme which I have had already frequent occasions to touch upon.

2. Qu. Some may fur: ber say to me, But why should God suffer his Roses to grow in the field, his Lillies to stand in the Vallies? Why hath he not (like men) a Garden inclosed for them? why suffers he the

wheat to grow smongft the tares ?

To this I answer, who are thou that disputest with God; or offerest counsels to infinite wisdom? or why should we seek to findout the reason of his actions? yet so far as we may give a reason

of his actions?

1. God is every day making Rofes and Lillies of the berbs of the field. and his Rofes flanding there, his Lillies being there, is of great uje in order to this work. When all Gods Rofer and Lillies in the world shall be come up and displayed, you shall see a transplantation in a moment of time. God is every day converting some or other, changing one heart or another, and he lets his Lillies and Rofes fland amongst the weeds of the field in order to this great work. Pliny faith, that the Lillies breed Litties with its juice : fure we are that both that and the Role too by the feed they fled, and by the influence of their roots, breed plants like themselves. The child of God drops his holy feed, the juice of his Grace, and is instrumental in breeding more. They must stand in the field, that others inconverted Souls] may fee their honest Conversation, and glorifie God in the day of their Visitation, 1 Pet. 2.12. Noah must fland in the old-world, and lot the Sodom (though their own righteons Souls be vexed) that they may Preach nighteonfuefs. Oh! that the People of God would confider this, that one end of their standing in the world is to make others like themselves.

2. Again, They have a work to do to glorifie God on earth: Even Christ himself prays not to be glorified with the Father, till he had said, Job. 17:4. I have glorified thee on Earth, I have finished the more which then hast given me to do. Christ hath a garden for all his plants of Grace, a garden so inclosed that the winds shall not have

How the Spense is the Rose of Sharon,

them, a Garden so pure that one weed shall not be in it; But there is an Aprenticeship which they must serve in the world before they come into this liberty of the sons of God: Heaven is but the wages of that work, though the wages of Grace, not of strict Debr and Justice. But I shall dive no deeper into the Councels of God, I come to the Application, which shall be only Instructive, and that in two words: 12 Of the Believers dignity. 2. Of the Believers

Learn hence, I. The Believers dignity, (This is the use I would have the men of the world to make of this point): The Believer is the Role of Sharon, the Lilly of the Vallies : The World is all a Vally in comparison of Heaven, a low place in comparison of that; This Vally is full of plants, which are the most excellent plants of the World? O the Saints of God, those that excel in Faith, Holinels Humility, those that are interessed in Christ! these are the Lillies of the Vallies! The World understands it not, they call the proud happy. (as the Prophet faith); they call the greatest men in the Parish, the richest men the best men in the Parish; but God judgeth otherwise, he tells you they are his spouses that are the Roses of Sharon, the Lillies of the Vallies. Reason directeth us to determine of the goodness or badness of a thing according to its subferviency, or non subserviency to its end. Thus you call that the best meat that nourisheth best, that the best Physick that cureth best, that the best flower in the garden, that is most useful and ornamental: why because Nourishment is the end of Eating, Curing the end of Phytick, Ornament and profit, the end of Gardenplants. Is not the glorifying of God, and the doing good to others, the end of mans life? are not they then the best men, that bring God most Glory, and do others most good? who are these are they not fuch as live a most christian holy Life and Conversation? O correct your judgment you fons of men! I say correct your judgment concerning Godly People, they are the Roles of your Sharon, the Lillies of your Vallies, the Crown and glary of your Gity. If you should see a nettle or thistle run up to a great heigth in the Garden, you will not conclude that's the best plant of the Garden. If any thould fay to you would prefently fay, what beauty do you fee init for what is it goodfor? If you fee drunkards, fwearers, profune Persons, run up amongst you to great heigths of dignity and wealth, do not think thefe the best men W. hat beauty is therein a profune Persons life ? what use is the beafily drunkard, of the

profane

profane swearer, the filthy adulterer of? They are the people that walk with God, that are the Roses of Sharon, the Lillies of the Vallies.

Secondly, learn hence the Believers duty. I will open it in a

few particulars:

1. There are some annual plants, plants of a year, they come up live and die in a year, but neither the Rose nor Lilly are such, they last many years: be you not like annual Plants dying in a short time, but like Roses and Lillies, lasting many years, and bringing forth

to Gods Glory.

2. Roses and Lillies are useful plants; 1. For Ornament. 2. For smell. 3. For propagating their Species: Be you like Lillies for Ornament; such as Solomon in all his Glory was not like unto: Labour to be the most Excellent in places where you are; Adorning the Doctrine of God, Tit. 2. 10. The Lilly and Rose excel all the plants of the Field. O study you, you that profess Christ to excel your Neighbours; excel them in Temperance, Sobriety, Chastity, Seriousness of Spirit. It is a shame for a Christian to be outshined in any Vertue, by any not planted into the same Stock with him; shew the World that there is more in Christ, more in the Grace of God which you have received, more in Gospel-principles to which you profess to walk, to make you bumble, esreless of the World, full of Charity, Meekness, &c. than there can be in nature, or in any meerly moral Principles.

2. Let your smell go abroad: The Romans Faith, 1. Rom 8. was spoken of throughout the World. O let your holy walking be spoken of through all the City where you live! It is a lamentable thing that Christians should live, that the worst of men should not smell a greater sweetness in their lives, than in the lives of those that never tasted how good the Lord is: O let your Light shine before men, &c.

3. Be Lillies and Roses for propagation of your Species. It is a great part of our business in the World; let's not be idle in it. Endeavour to commend Christ to others, to bring your Children, your Servants, your Neighbours to love Christ; and make haste in this, for you are but Roses, and will like them have a fading time.

Lastly, let this consideration, That you are Roses in Sharon, Lillies in the Vallies, learn you patience under all the sufferings of this life. There's no sence for the Rose of the Field against the cold frosts and blasts; no sence for the Lilly of the Vallies against the violence of the herds that sed there. It is enough for you that Christ seeds amongst bis Lillies, Cant. 6.3. And that the

Christs Sponse a Lilly among ft Thorns.

IO

time will come, when Christ will pluck his Roses, and transplan his Lillies, and then the herds shall bite them no more, the frost nip them no more, nor the winds blaft them any more.

Cant. 2. v. 2.

As a Lilly amongst the Thorns; so is my beloved amongst the Daughters.

Hrift had heard his beloved fay, I am the Rose of Sharon, and

Non fine caufa lilio comparas te amica! Mercer.

Tu requiem quaris, &c: Lyra.

the Lilly of the Vallies; himself now takes up her words, and replieth upon her in her own metaphor: O my beloved, it is not without a cause that thou hast compared thy self to a Lilly; for ar a Lilly amongs the Thornes , fo is my beloved amongst the Daughters . Whether he speaks this by way of condoling, pitying her dangerous and afflicted State. (as forme think) or by way of commendation of her, that the was as a Lilly (though amongst Thorns,) or by way of correction of ber. Thou lookest for Rest, and talkest of a Bed; but alas ! thy state is no state of Rest, thou art a Lilly among st Thorns! Or by may of comfort to her, (as some others think) or whether upon all these accounts will be matter of our farther inquiry hereafter. In the mean time every one may fee, that the Text is a comparison, and in it there are 2 comparisons. Here is a comparison betwixt, I. A Beloved and a Lilly. 2. Betwixt the Danebiers and the Thorns. The Notes of the Comparison are the 2 particles : The affix Dand the particle | I fiemt : Let me first open the terms.

כשושנה fome would because among Thorns החוחים Marcer.

We met with the word translated Lilly in the former verse; It hath its name in Heb. from its 6 Leaves; they fay the City have it a Rofe, Shufban had its name from this word, because of the many Lillies growing near to it. The word translated Thorns is nin. There are many words in the Heb. tongue which fignify Thorns; fome fay 20, fome fay g. This is one, and is often ufed, I Sam, 12.6. there it is translated thickets, a thicket is a place of Thorns. So, 2 Chron. 33. 11. Manaffes was took amongst the Thorns. It is tranflated thiffles, 70b. 31. 40. It is ufed, Prov. 26. 9. tranflated Brambles, Ifa. 34.15. Thiftler, 2 Kings 14. 9. you fee Interpreters at a lofs concerning what kind of Thorns to interpret the term, and therefore they translate it a Thorn, a Bramble, a Thiftle a Thicket; nor do I think a Christiy of inquity worth the while; For the other words of the Text we have met with them before,

nor is there any difficulty in them: I shall therefore proceed from this explication of the words, to a more useful explication of the matter in the Text: The Proposition lies before you.

Prop. As a Lilly among Thorns, fo is Christs beloved amongst the

Daughters.

It is Gregory Niffens Observation. That here is a method of Similitudes observed by our Saviour, he had before likened the Sponse to a Bride to a Virgin beloved of a man, to shew the transcendent love which he bare to her; this he repeats in this verse, in this verse, which he bare to her; this he repeats in this verse, or a Wife as the Church and every believing Soul is beloved of Christ; she is his Companion, his near kinswoman, his Beloved.

2. He had compared her to a Dove for it's eyes, as Chast as a Dove, as quick and piercing as a Dove.

3. Here he likens her to a flower, yea to the finest of flowers, but amongst Thorns, to mind her that as the hath a duty of positive Holiness in which she is indebted to him: So she hath a duty of self-denial and suffering for his name.

2. It is the observation of others. That our Saviour compares the beloved to one Lily; but speaks of Thorns in the plural number. Christs flock is a little flock, great, if considered in it self, 7000 of every tribe were sealed, but small in comparison of the rest of the World. There were many widows in Israel, saith our Saviour, but it was but to one widow that Elijah was sent. There are many Souls in the world, but they are but sew to whom Christ cometh in the workings of his saving Grace: it is not every ane that saith Lord, Lord, but be that doth the will of our Father. The way to

Heaven is a firait way and few there be that find it.

3. Delrio observes, That it is a token of Love and Intimacy, when a present friend speaks of a friend present in the 3 person. Christ doth not say as a Lilly among Thorns so are thou, but so is my beloved amongst the Daughters: If there be any love to be concluded from the form of the Expression, it certainly cannot be more properly noted in any Discourse than that of Christ to his beloved. As his heart is sull of Love, so his words are nothing else but that Love, But that I may not stick too much upon the Skirts of the text, let us inquire by way of Explication; Who is this beloved. 2. What are these Thorns, and why are they so set out.

3. Who are the Daughters, wherein the aptness of the similitude lies. 4. Why Christ will let his beloved be amongst Thorns. 5. What improvements may be made of this notion.

C2

z. Who

Who is this Beloved.

1. Who is this Lilly, this beloved? A few words will ferve for this, which I have before determined. Omitting therefore the carnal fancy of those who make her to be some woman whom Solomon loved, as also the idle fancy of some Popish writers who interpret whatsoever is said in this Song of the Beloved. concerning the Virgin Mary: And not restraining the notion (as some who make this Song only a Narrative of something past or a Prophesy of some thing to come,) to the Church of the lews; I shall determine as I have done all along, that it is every individual Believer, and the whole Church, especially the invisible part of the Church militant, (which is made up of juffified Souls) that is here meant. This is the Spoule of Christ (united to him by Faith:) Thete are the Souls, of whom he hath faid they are my Brothers, my Sifters, my Mother. These are they upon whom he hath fet his Love above all the Souls upon the earth; thefe are his ביתהים, his fellows, his companions, his neer kinred, his beloved : Passing this therefore let us inquire;

whom this Beloved is as a Lilly. We all know what kind of creature a Thorn is: It is a rough prickly plant, of little use but so make bedges, &c. The Holy Ghost in Scripture makes use of this term Thorns: I. To express wicked and ungodly men, Micah. 7. 4. The best of them is a briar, the most upright is as a Thorn-bedge, Ez. 2. 6. Though briars and Thorns be with thee, and thou dwellest amongst Scorpions; yet be not afraid of their words, Ezek, 28. 24. and there shall be no more a pricking briar nor a grieving Thorn to the bouse of Israel, and so in many other Texts, which will fall in in our further Discourse; wicked men, for many reasons as I shall shew you, are

fitly compared to Thoms. But Secondly,

I find the holy Ghost using this notion of Thorns, to express the eares and distractions of the World: In the parable of the sower Mat. 13.7. and Mark 4. compared with v. 27. of that in Mat. for v. 7. some seed sell amongst thorns, v. 27 He also that received the seed amongst Thorns, is he that beareth the Word, and the eares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and it becomes unstraitful. This is the chief use of the Metaphor which I observe in holy Scripture.

But Corruptions and Temptations to fin from without are Thorns.
Thus devout Bernard, Plenus est mundus spinis, in terra sunt, in aere sunt, in carne tua sunt: The World saith he is full of Thorns, they

grow on the Earth, they grow in the air, they grow in thy own stells. Spins onlys est, spins pens est, spins falsus frater, spins vicinus est malus: The neighbouring sinner is a Thorn, the salse brother is a thorn, the inbred corruption is a thorn, the temptation from without is a thorn; possibly this was Saint Paul's Thorn in the sless given to buffet him; it is called the messager of Satan,

2 Cor.7.12.)

4. All manner of Afflictions are thorns, Hos. 2.6. Therefore I will bedg up thy may with thorns, and make a wall that she shall not find her paths: thus Pro. 15. 19. The slothful mans way of Thorns, is opposed to the plain way of the Righteons man: These are the thorns amongst which the beloved of Christ is as a Lilly. Concupiscentia carnis, mundane solicitudines, malorum cohabitatio, (saith Hugo Card.) The lusts of the slesh, the cares of the World, the company of wicked and ungodly men. But let us see the sitness of the Metaphor, why are these Things or Persons compared to thorns.

Delrio saith, there are three things noted concerning the Thorn, Cito floret, cito are soit, aculeis pungit; It quickly flourisheth, and quickly withereth, and pricketh while it flourisheth. But I shall show you the propriety of the Metaphor in eight particulars:

1. Thorns were the first fruits of the fall of Adam, Gen. 3. 18. God faid unto Adam, Curfed shall be the ground for thy fake, thorns and thiftles shall it bring forth unto thee . Gen. 3. 18. Peffimum germen faith Bernard, the bad fruit of the fall of man; for whose fake the Earth was curfed: The feed of thorns and the wicked who are the feed of the ferpent came into the World together, and were both the fad effects of the first Transgression. Till then there was no need of worldly cares, no being for wicked men; no thorny lufts and corruptions in the beart of men nothing to hinder man in his way to Heaven . God had not bedged up his may with thorns, he had a plain path to his Fathers house. All the thorns which have fince lain in his way fprang up in one day, even in that bitter day of mans fall. A fad day for the children of God! They may fay of it as Fob when he curfed the day of his birth; Oh that that day had been darkness, that the light had not shope upon it! Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it, let a cloud dwell upon it. But that's the first; wicked men, finful lufts, worldly eares, all affictions, with the thorns and thiftles of the Earth, came all into the World together. They are twins and came out of the

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womb of the fameens, and are the fruit of that desadful malediffien with which the World was curied for mans sake. Had not that day been, the Earth bad been without a thorn, and the World without wicked men (the best of whom are like a briar,) and the heart of man without a care (save only how to gloritie God.)

and the body of man without an Ache or pain.

Secondly, A Thorn is an ugly plant, it hath no beauty in it. no loveliness at all, hence no man plants it in his garden; the Rose and Lilly have their beauties but the Thorn hath none. As it was the fruit of the curse, so it bears a mark of it in the very loooks. and furface of it. There is no beauty in a Sinner. A wicked man is an inordinate creature, and where there is no order there can be no beauty at all. The most of wicked men have no beauty in the eve of Reason but none of them have any in the eye of God In the eye of Reason, what beauty is there in a Swinish Drunkard, a beastly Adulterer a profuse Smearer a griping Ulurer an oppressive Extortioner a malicions Perfecutor? The light of nature thews that fuch finners are altogether darkness, ugliness, deformity. But now in the eye of God. every impenitent unbelieving finner, is a deformed creatures for he counts none comely but fuch as have Christs comelines upon him. The finner looks upon himself in the false glass of bis own conceit and opinion and thinks he fees many fine features in his face : He is thus and thus born, thus bred; he hath fuch an estate and such honours: But his neighbour looking on him in the glass of Morality. fees he hath notone line of comelinessmeithertemperance, nor justice. neither chaftisy, nor humility, nor any thing elfe that should make a Soul lovely vet this man who juftly condemneth his Neighbour is also deceived himself; for he looks upon himself in the glass of Morality; (a glass which Aristotle made for him) and he thinks himself lovely, and indeed he is so in comparison with an ill-favoured Drunkard he fees in his own face the fair lines of inflice fobriety chafity, veracity: But the Christian that stands by him, and looks for the face of one that owns the great name of a Christian, in the glass of Gods boly Word where he feeth. That every Unbeliever is pronounced a damned creature. & c.he fees no beauty at all in him. And God whose eye discerns no beauty in any Soul but what it hath from Christ; he judgeth the Souls of these men deformed Souls in whom no beauty is. Some Thorns may be comparatively beautiful, but none of them hath the beauty of a flower; they can have but the beauty of Thorns which at the best is but very little. Thirdly, Thorns are useless both as to smell and fruit; what

pleafure

pleasure is there in the finell of a briar? What's the fruit of a thiftle worth? No man (faith our Saviour) gathers grapes of thiftee or figgs of thorns, Mat. 7.16. Luk. 6.44. the barren field of the fluggard, Prov. 24.31. is faid to be all grown-over with thorns. And the Judgment of barrenness which God threatned to the Ifraelites, Hol. 10.8. is fet out under this Metaphor, Hof. 10.8. Ifa. 34.13. The barren Earth is fet out underth notion of the ground that bringeth forth nothing but Briars and Thorne, Heb. 6.8. A fmell indeed the Thorns have, but usually it is a very ungrateful one: Fruit indeed some of them do bear, but of little or no value. Of what use are wicked and ungodly men, either as to [mell or fruit? they have a fmell indeed, but it is not (as Leab faid) like the smell of the field which the Lord hath bleffed. No, it is like the finell of a Thicket which the Lord hath curled: what is their report in the World? What have they a name for ? one man fmells of Beer and Wine, that's his fmell; What's his name in the World? he hath a name for much drinking, a name for putting his bottle to his neighbours nofe, till he bath made him fick with vomiting, that he may look upon his nakedness : this is his name, this is that he is famous for. Another man he hath a name for uncleanness; a third for Iwearing, curfing, &c. And as is his name fo is his fruit. He bringeth forth much of the fruits of the fielh, which (faith the Apostle, Gal. 5.19.) are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lafciviousness, idolatry, witcheraft, &c. but nothing of the fruits of the Spirit; much of the fruit of fin unto death, but no thing of the fruit of Righteonfuel's unto life.

4. Thorns are prickly grievous things. Thus the Metaphul is frequently used in Scripture: Ezek. 28.24. There shall be no more a pricking briar unto the bouse of Israel, nor a grieving thorn of those shus are round about them. Pro. 26.9. At a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drawkerd. Thus it is said of the Canadanies they should be thoms in the eyes of the Israelites, Jos. 23.13. Thus Saint Paul had a thorn in the selfit, 2 Cor. 12.7. Such are wicked and ungodly men: Micab. 7.4. The best of them is at a briar, the most ungold is sharper than a thorne-bedg. As is a Thorn to the tender flower, so is a wicked man to a child of God., continually galling and pieteing him: And as a thorn naturally offends what is next it that is of a tender nature; So there is a natural primity in the nature of wicked men to the true children of God. The same day that the earth was cursed, and began to bring forth

briars and thorns, did God say: I will put an enmity also betwint thy seed and her seed, i. e. betwint the seed of the Serpent, and the seed of the Woman; The Devil and his Children, and the Lord Jesus Christ and his Seed. And what may be said of wicked men upon this account, may be said also of inward Lusts and Corruptions, and of Satans temptations; they are all pricking Briars, and

grievous Thorns to the house of Ifrael.

5. Look as Thorns easily fold and combine together; So do wicked and ungodly men. Herod and Pilate agree against the Lord Jesus Christ, Gebal and Ammon and Amaleck, the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre; take crafty counsel together, and consult against the Lords hidden Ones; saying, come let us cut them off from being a Nation, that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. The Tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaclites of Moah, and the Hagarens they consult together with one consent, and are consederate against Israel; Ashur also joyned with them: There are as many several sorts of wicked men as there are of Thorns, and they as easily and naturally sall in together, and consederate against them that fear God, as the Thorns sall in and sold one with another for use. The holy Ghost takes notice of the Metaphor thus, Neb. 1. 10. while you be folden together as Thorns, and drunken as drunkards, you shall be devoured as stubble fully dry.

6. Thorns where ever they are are hindrances to other things. The feed that grew up amongh Thorns was choaked, Mat. 13: The wise-man saith Prov. 15. 9. The way of the stothful is an bedg of Thorns, but the righteous mans way is made plain. Possibly amongh other senses this is one. As the wise-man says elsewhere, the sluggard saith there is a Lion in the way, he finds many hindrances in the way of his duty; but the righteous man, he counts every way plain; so God saith, I will bedg up thy way with Thorns, Hos. 2. 6. Inward Lusts and Corruptions, in the Christians heart, forreign temptations, the neighbourhood of ungodly men, false brethren, they are all of them great hindrances, to the shootings forth of Grace, and

the growth of Holiness, yet

7. Thorns have their use, and prudent men make good use of them for sencing; such an use doth God make of the worst of men, he useth them for a defence unto his people. It may seem strange to you, that wicked men should be Thorns of offence and defence too; yet thus it is, not from the nature of the Thorn, but from the wisdom of him that ordereth them, and their motions. Our

Brightman

Brightman thinks that this similitude doth not quely set out the Churches excellency, but also the Churches security and fatery. This is one of Sampsons siddles, how out of the exters there should come meat, and out of the strong there should come sweetness. But so it is:

1. Ordinarily, one party of the Churches enemies will defend it against another: thus it was all along with Urael. Pharaob defends the Ifraelites against Nebu hadnezzer, and N habbanezzer was a Thorn-hedg to them against Pharaob; God often so works it.

2. Oft-times also the Thomas of Enemies, Affilians, Temperations from mithout, make up as it were an hedg to defend the Soul of the Saint against the injury of lasts and corruptions mithin. Pauls Thomas in the flesh kept him from being puffed up, and exalted above measure. Davids Thomas of Affiliations, kept him in within the compass of Gods precepts; before he was affiliated by ment aftery. The child of God many a time seeth cause to thank God for Affiliations; for malicious Enemies, &c. Even as the husbandman is sometimes very glad of a crop of Thomas.

8. Lastly, Thorns are at last to be burned: while they are green, and have any thing of Vigous in them, they are made use of but when they are withered, they are good for nought but to be burned. It is thus with these thorns, 2 Sam. 23.6. But the Sons of Belial shall all of them as Thorns be thrust away, and they shall be unterly burns with fire in the same place, 150. 33. 12. As Thorns cut up first shey be burns in the fire. We have now found out the Thorns of

the Text, and the aptness of the comparison.

The third Question is, Who are the Daughters, here mentioned?

So is my beloved amongst the Daughters.

Disapters is a term of Relation: and we must find out a Mother that relates to them. 1. It must be a common Mother, for we are speaking of persons of several names and natures. 2. It must be a fruitful Mother for the hath many Daughtery. There are two more common Mothers.

1. It was faid of Eve, that the was the mother of all living: It is faid of the Church. 2. That the is the mother of all professor, the mother of wall: both these Mothers are like Rebress, they have Twins strongling in these womb, two differing nations. Ene brought forth a Coin and an Abel. The Church hath in it Inver and These. All men and women fare the Daughters of Manusind. All series professor are the Daughters of the Church; but as Abraham had a feel of the Church is but as Abraham had a

feed like the daft of the corth, and a feed like the State of Heaven, a starry and dusty feed; so the Church bath a feed after the Spirit,

and a feed after the fleft. " Wante , water and the atte was the attention

The Daughters here spoken of must be such to whom the Similitude of Thorns will agree, they must be wicked persons. Non bone filie que pungum, faith Bernard, they are evil daughters that prick. The only queltion is, Whether by Daughters here be meant. The Heathen who are the Daughters of the World; or fuch as are within the bosome of the Church falle Professors; and these again are, I. Profane perfons, 2. Secret hypocrites. Hypocrites and Apostates, these are all daughters by the Mothers side, but not by the Fathers. Spine propter malignitatem mornin file propter communionem Sacranientorum, faith Aug. Origen faith, He would never have called them Daughters, that had no relation to the Church as her Mother. Therefore both he and Gregory and Lyra and fome others understood it of hereticks and false professors. But Hieron and others more largely interpret it: I fee no reason to refirain it. but underfrand by Daughters all thole who are not begetten of God though born of men, yes born in the Church: files mest, effimingtos animos peccatorum (faith de Pomes) he calls all the effeminate Souls of finners, Daughtere. The fence then is this; that look. in the field as a Liffy is amongst Thorns, to is every believing Soul amonest any forts of wicked men, whether they be profane perfons, or Hypocrites, Heathers, or Hereticks, and Apollates.

The third thing which I have to enquire upon is the Aptnefe of the Similitude: we have found out the beloved Lilly; we have also found out the grieving Thorns, and the Daughters represented by

them. But.

3. O. Why dath our Savieur compare the beloved converting wish the Daughters of the World; to the februation at a Lilly among the Thorns ?

I find Interpreters divided in the Interpretation of this Metaphor: fome think that Clirift herecommends his Spooles beauty, and fledfaffnels; others, that he minds her of her officed States; Others again that by this Similtude he minds her of her Duty; Others that he minds her of her Succour and Safety; we will take in all four, and focak to each diffincity.

I. de the Lilly (though amongst Thorns) is a beautiful, levely ibriving plant; to is every truly believing Souls, so is the Church of Soil amongst whited and ungother men. Into this sence Lindo Pifestor, Tremelling, Deader, Marrowa, Against, and the Dutch Amoreting.

Anneators, expounding my text. This is the nature of a true Lillian, in Believer, he abides a Lilly though amongst Thorns, a white and pregintes f lovely Lilly. It is Bernard's note, That the Lilly doth beautify the proprio illuftra-Thorne that rend it. The true Believer is never transformed by re non ceffat. his Affiliaions, Hear the Church Glorying in this, Pfal. 44. 17. Bernard in All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thy precepts; neither have me dealt falfly in thy Covenant. Lot was a Lilly amone ft Thorns he kept a Righteous Soul, in the middeft of a wicked generation of Sodomites. Neab was a Lilly amongst Thorns. he was a Preacher of righteoufness in a time when all fish bad corrupted their mays. Caleb was a Lilly amongst Thorns; he walked fully with God, when all Ifrael was in a mutiny. Obadiab was a Lilly among ft Thorns there grew nothing elfe in Ahabs Courts lyet there he hid Prophets by fifty in a Cave. You shall observe of grass growing amongst Thorns, that it grows higher than the other grass of the Field, 'tis Marians's note. Quad Spante nascitur Letin prodit. The Lilly amongst Thorns, faith he, is the fairest and most glorious Lilly; it appears such because amongst Thorns which appear unlovely: It is fo, for (faith he) there it comes up alone, and the flower that comes up naturally, comes up faireft ; experience sheweth it. that Green never grows to fair as amongst Thorns. 'Tis like the Palm-tree, the way to make it flourish is to tread it under foot. If I would feek for a pattern of Christianity, I would look for it in a Nero's Court. The fire fcorcheth most in the coldest weather : The enmity of the cold makes the internal heat greater (being more contracted:) There's none to watchful as those that lodg in their enemies quarters: Let a Christian be amongs flowers; let his converse be with none but such as are like himself, he neither showeth so glorious, nor indeed is so; the Sun of prosperity tempts off his garments, and he often walks naked. It was an old observation that when the Church had Wooden Chalices the had Golden Priefts, but when the came to Golden Chaliers, the was ferved with wooden Prieftr. Christians are never so humble, never so Holy, as when they are most amongst Briars and Thorns. The reason why the true Believes (though amongst Thorns) is a Lily fill. is, because he is bred of an incorruptible Seed; the Apostle calls it the find of God. There are flowers which (according to their foil) change their hearty (at leaft;) but these are other plants. that let them grow where they will, they are fill the fame one is every true Believet. The painted bypecties hath only

colour of a flower, he wants the radical versue; thence it is, that he feems a Lilly no longer than he grows smongst Lillies. The root of the matter is not in bim, he borrows all his Religion from interest. And is only Spiritually good in appearance, in order to some sensible good which he hath in his eye. Religion is in credit, 'tis the way to preferment, &cc. therefore he takes hold of the skirt of a Tem. If he comes once to be amongst Thorns, he appears a Lilly no longer; but the beauty of holiness which is in the Saints life, is not adventitious, but flowing from an inward root, and spiritual Vertue created by the Spirit of God in his Soul. He never is more glorious than when be is amongst Thorns : not only because the contrariety of their lives makes his to thine more than otherwise it would; but because he is free from those temptations which would debauch his Soul "Tis true, Thorns are Temptations, but let me tell you a bed of down is a more dangerous temptation, than a Crown of thorns: Ifrael was more prejudiced by the Moabitish woman than by the Curses of Balaam, or the hostile oppolition of Balak. But this is enough to have spoken to the first particular.

2. Secondly, As a Lilly amongh Thorns, i. e. in an afflictive State. and condition: This indeed is that which is commonly judged to be the fenfe of the words. Thus Bernard, it fignifies inquiesu. dinem tentationum et tribulationum aculeos; the unquiet State of Gods People by reason of temptations and the stings of afflictions. This lense is obvious, the Lilly among & Thorns, is subjett to be rent upon every wind. Such is the State of every true Believer, and of the Church of God in this world; the Uraelites in the wilderness of Sin, f a place of Thorns,) was but a type of what Gods Ifrael shall be to the end of the world. The Evangelist faid of our Saviour, that it beloved bim to fuffer. The Apostle faith . That be that will live godly in Christ Tefu muft fuffer perfecution; and that by much Iribulation [Pricking of Thorns] we must enter into the Kingdom of God. The vision of the four Horns in Zachariah, cb. r. foake this v. 19. Zachariah inquiring the interportation, was answered. Thefe are the borns, which buve feattered Track Judab and Jerufalem. Look upon the state of the Church, from the very first rife of it, and you will find it true. It began first in Adoms Family, Abel was the Lilly, Cain was the pricking briar, and the grieving Thorn; he murthereth Abel Go from thence to Nook, Gen. 6 5, 8. Noob was a Lilly amonal Thorns.

Luke 24. 46. 2 Tim. 3. 12.

Thorns, he was alone. The wickedness of man was great upon the earth; Thorns were on every fide, Nosb was a Lilly amone ft them: fo was Lot, the Apostle faith, bis righteons Soul was vexed with the Sodomites conversation. Abraham and his Families were Lillies, but Lillies amongst Thorns, the Canaanites were round about him. So it was with Jacob and Joseph, so were the Children of Ifrael in Egypt, when they came out of Egypt and fet their feet in Canaan; they were fill as Lillies amongst Thorns; God fo ordered it, Jul. 2. 3. Wherefore I also faid I will not drive them out from before you, but they shall be as Thorns in your fides, what were they all the time they were in Canaan, other than Lillies amongst Thorns. The Philiftines pricking them on one fide, and the Affyrians and Egyptians on the other. And the true and fincere professors amongst them much more; witness Elijab and other Servants of God, when they were removed into Babylon, and abode there 70 years, what were they all that time but Lillies amongst Thorns? And (which I desire you would still observe) as the whole visible Church, was so in respect of Heathens; so the more firica Profession were in reference to their Brethren, when God fent Ezekiel, Ezek. 2. 6. he commands him not to be afraid of their words, though Briars and Thorns were wish bim, and be dwelt amongst Scorpions. Come to the Church of God in the new Testament: Christ himself you know was a Lilly amongst Thorns, he was crowned (you know) with Thorns at his death; he lived amongst Thorns while he lived, one while they talk of stoning bim, another while of sbrowing bim down from an hill headlong. It became not the disciples to be above their Master, the Acts of the Apostles, and the whole story of the primitive Church for 300 years after Christ, represents the Church to you as a Lilly among Thorns. After that time, her flate amongst Heathens on the one fide and Hereticks and Apostates on the other, was the fame, every whit as fad, if not more than before, for many hundreds of years after, the Thorns were to grown up, that it was hard to fee any Lilly at all. About 160 years fince it began to put up air head again more wilbly; but look where you will upon her fince that time, you will full fee,the bath been a Lilly amongst ;
Thorns.In what other condition bath been that part of the Church ... which was in Germany, Rrance, Spain, the low Countries [till within few years? In what other flate were we in England, till King Edward the 6th. and again over-run in Queen Maries time Set 2 (many

(many a Lilly prickt to death by that grieving Thorn.) Since her days indeed God hath given us more reft; but take the true members of the Church, (who indeed only deserve the name,) such I mean as live a diftinguishing Life and Conversation, walkeing closely with God all this time, hath not there been an enny in Ephraim against them? I wish we could see it ceased this day: But there is, there must be an Enmity between the seed of the Woman, and of the Serpent, and the fire must produce some smoke.

Thirdly, Mr. Ainsworth saith, that Christ by this similitude sheweth his beloved what she ought to be; or, As a Lilly among st Thorns. The Lilly even among st Thorns is white and innocent, yea, and it grows up and flourisheth amongst them; but I shall not inlarge upon this, because I spake much to it under the first

head, and fhall speak more of it in the Application.

Lastly, As a Lilly amongst Thorns is defended and protedled, yea, even by the Thorns; so is the Church of God. This is Mr. Brightman's notion. God makes the wicked of the world to be as a thorn-hedg to his people; but of this also before. I proceed to the fourth Question.

Qu. 4. Will some fay, why doth the Lord suffer his Lillies to be amongst Thorns ? It is not for want of power because he cannot burn up the Thorns, or transplant the Lillies, he can do both, and will too in his due time: It is not for want of Love, he that for their fake removed himself from Heaven to Earth, and again to do their bufiness ascended up to Heaven, could if he pleased easily remove them from Earth to Heaven : It must be then the product of his Wildom, in pursuit of his wife and glorious ends. The great end of all his actions, is his own Glory. All things are both from blin and for bim. This glorifying of bis name, is an end which he obtains two ways: 1. In the true falvation of his people, 2. In the just condemnation of the wicked. But though the Salvation of the godly be free, (without any meriting cause in them) and that the Damnation of the wicked may be just. As by the more pofisive directive Alls of bis Providence, he doth make the Some fit for his Kingdom, and work them up for Glory : So by the permittive perations of by Providence, he doth fuffer Sinners to fit themfelies for wrath. Now as both thefe things are done, by various Providences; fo by that converse which God in his Wisdom hath appointed, his Lillies amough the wicked which are Thorns, both Company of the what other these things are done.

By this means, God is glorified by and emerming bis Saints,

and that two ways: 1. As their faith and patience are exercifed: Tribulation worketh patience, Rom. 5. 3. Here's the Fairb, and the Patience of the Saints f faith Saint Jobn Rev. 13. 10) Hetes where? when the Beaft fooke Blafpbemy v. s. 6. and made war with the Saints. Faith and Patienes, are rare and eminent Graces by which God is highly honoured, and the child of God rarely fitted for the inheritance of the Saints of Light. They are never learned to well, nor tryed to well, nor used to much, as when the people of God are as Lillies amongs Thorns, what shall I fay of bumblity fervency in Spirit ferving God, watebfulneft in all our comperfarion, &cc. all these exercises of Grace are quickned and improved by the Saints being as a Lilly amongst Thorns. Car wok ex perditit bomintbm boc lucrarether Deus quod prodeffent bonts ut in bu redimeretur factura motionitatp vorum (faith a quaint Authors) Why thould not God be a faver (if it may be) by the worth of men; 'tis all that God hath in recompence for the injury they do in the World, they are a little profitable to his Saints.

But 2. All the honour of the Child of God redeands to God. The beloved of God never bath more honour, and thews more beautiful than amongil Thorns. The Children of God are but flars, the darker the night is, the brighter the Stars appear. The world's the World is, the more Glory there is in a Believer's convertation

on.

3. Gods power is glorified in keeping his Lilly among! Therms. It is a miracle of Providence that a burning bulk should not be confamed, that a Lilly amongs! Thorns should not be tent in pieces; it is like the life of Daniel in a Lions-den, like the ibrie Children walling in the midit of the fire, and not being burned. Methinks it were enough even to convert an Atheist for him to consider, how many years the Arkot the Church hath been floating upon the waters of the World, and flow many tempels have been in the time; and that it should live at this Sea: How many exemiles the Gospel-Church hath had from its first plantation, and that yet lets not pluckt up by the roots. How many frumps, sedim, and discouragements the close-walking Christian in course meets with, and yet that there should be any such on the Earth?

Secondly, By this means, as the Veffile of the are fixed for Hereas, for the Veffile of means are fixed for the Manuaction of Bell. I could you the last day, that the end of Thorns is to be beautiful they will not burn in their greenpels: men let them wither, and to fit them

alium in corpore perfequitur. prius ipfe in corde perfecutionem fuftinere cognoscitur Aug. Ser 10 de Sanc.

Vie. 1.

for the fire. The end of Reprobates is to be burned, but God is inft, and cannot let them burn, till they be mithered with Sins; till Omis homo qui their Sins be at the full, (as the Amorites were.) And let me toll you, nothing ripens the wicked for ruine, like their pricking as Thorns. Christ feeing the Pharifees mad of perfecution, bids them go on and fill up the measures of your iniquities, that upon you may come oll the Righteons blood &cc. Augustine hath a faving to this purpose; that every one that perfecutes another is first himself perfecuted in his own Consciences he is left of God to fit himself for Damnation. That I conceive to be his meaning; but I have spoken enough to the Explication of this point, I come now to the Application. And first let me speak.

. To the wicked of the Earth, (those who are pricking Briars, and grievous Thorns to the house of Hrael.) O confider what you have heard, and be ashamed, and tremble and fear, and

take beed.

1. How different is Gods judgment concerning you, from the value which men put upon you. It is De Ponte's observation, Quas mundu Rofas, Dem Spinas vocat. Those whom the world calls Roses, God calls Thorns. If the world fees a ranting Diver, that drinks wine in bowls, is clothed in Silk, and fares deliciously every day, the calls this man a Rofe (a province-Rose) the best man in the

place where he is, God calls him a Thorn.

2. What a shame should this reflect upon the face of every Sinner? To think that he is but a Thorn in the World : One would think that a rational Soul should not fatisfy it self in an useless life, it is a fad thing for a man in his folitary Reflections, to confider, that he lives in the World for nothing, that he is one whom the world might well spare: Or that he doth no good in it as from himfelf. and out of his own counsel and intention, but as it were over-ruled by another, and ordered beyond his own intention; such a one now is a wicked manshe is of no other use than a Thorn in the world: In his own nature and acting from his own intention and dispofition, he doth no good at all in the world; only God makes use of him, lometimes to flop a gap; to be a protection to his people against some other swine of the earth, that would root them out : Sometimes he uleth them, to chaftile his People and teach them. (as it is faid that Gideon taught the men of Succoth with briare, and

3. Nay Laftly, what a terrour thould this frike into the bearts

of all the imposity of the earth, especially such as he pricking aborns, active instruments in opporting and pursuing the people of God, to consider that their end is so be burned. It was David's Prophefy, 2 Sam. 23. 6. But the sons of Belial shall all of them be thrust away as Thorns, and they shall be utterly burne with fire, their joy is here like the crackling of Thorns under a post their burning hereaster shall be like the burning of Thorns, when God shall have no further use of them.

Secondly: As to those who are the Lords Lillies among the Thomas, the true spouse of the Lord Jesus Christ, let them improve

this notion four ways.

1. Not thinking it ftrange if they feel the pricking of Thorns : It is the Apostles exhortation, I Pet 4.12. Beloved think it not frange comcerning the fiery Trysl, which is to try you as though fome firange thing bad bappened to you; but rejoyce in as much as you are made partakers of Christs Sufferings, that when bis Glory shall be revealed, you may be glad alfo with exceeding great joy. The Apostle, 1 Thef. 2. 2. speaketh to the fame purpofe: That no man should be moved by thefe afficition ons, knowing that we are appointed thereunto. There are many Arguments in these two places to perswade Christians, though they be as Lillies amongst Thorns, to be patient and content. 1. It is no ftrange thing. 2. It is to try them. 3. It is but a partnership with Christs fufferings: he was crowned with thorns, he endured the contradiction of Sinners, &c. 4. Afflictions further their joy, and Glory. If we fuffer with bim, we shall reign with bim, Rom. 8. 5. God hath appointed them to thefe affictions. His Will from eternity decreed, his Providence bath all along ordered his Spoule to be a Lilly amongst Thorns. Augustine brings in God answering his fervants complaining of his justice for fuffering the Thorns of the World to be fo grievous to them, thus: Heecine eft fider tha? Heceine ego tibi promifi, &co. Is this thy Eaith? did I ever promife thee any fuch things? or were it thou made a Christian upon this condition that thou thouldest flourish in the world? when therefore thou feelest the prickings of Thorns, thy finful neighbours. galling thee with their ill tongues, vexing thee with their unjust and causeless molestations; O fatisfy thy self with this, my Saviour hath of old likened me to a Lilly amongst Thorns, himself-was po better than a Lilly amongst Thorne, &cc.

2. Secondly therefore, ceafe to wonder that you are among h Briars and Thorns, that's your lots or that they are pricking and grievous to

you, that's their nature, and nothing less can be expected from them: Let it be your business to justify the notion, and to approve yourselves indeed Lilies even amongs Thorns.

1. Abiding Lillier, though you may be among it Thorns, I told you before that herein shall it appear if you be Lillier indeed, if you have the nature of the Lilly, and not the colour meerly, if the feed

of God abideth in you.

2. Keeping your Whiteness and Beauty, so the Lilly doth. Non mediocris titulus est virtuits (saith Bernard,) inter provos vivere bene, et inter malignos innocentic candorem retinere. It is a great honour to a Soul to be good amongst the worst of men, and to keep the whiteness of an holy life in a most unholy generation.

3. Nay thirdly, I noted to you, that the Lilly shoots up bigbesh and is fairest amongst the Thorns: let us do likewise, let us be more hely per antiperistasin; let the wickedness of the wicked ingage us to walk more strictly, and more humbly with God. Let not the enmity of sinful men discourage you in the ways of Holi-

nels. tastili and may

4. Lastly, The Lilly doth no harm to the Thorns amongst which it grows. Be you wise as Serpents (saith our Savious,) innocent as Daves. The Thorns rend the Lilly, but the Lilly hurts not them, you must expect that the Thorns of the world, should rend your names, rend your estates, and rend your flesh too (when God lets loose the chain so fars) but far he such things from you. They are lest to cursing, you are called to Blessing. Oh Bless and Carle not, you know our Saviours rule: I say unto you, Love your enemies, do good to them that have you, bless them that persecute you, and

pray for shem that defpitefully ufe you.

3. This notion effords some comfort unto the people of God. God sending our Exchiel to Prophely to a peevish people, Exch. 2. 6, speaks to him thus: Son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be thou of said of their words, though Briars and Thorns be with thee, and thom dwellest amongst Scorpions; you that sear the Lord, be not afraid, be not discouraged, though briars and thorns be with you, though you dwell amongst Scorpions, amongst wicked men who are ready to search you like Briars, and to sting you like Scorpions, be not afraid of them, be not afraid to own the name of God, and the profession of Religion amongst them. 1. God can make the thorne to be addresse vayous he can make your friends, and

he can make them to ferve you, beyond and contrary to their difposition and intention. 2. But besides, God bimfelf will be a Thornbedg to you: he will not suffer them to do you wrong, if they attempt it, it shall be at a like (but far greater) hazard, as he that

goes to pluck a Lilly out of a thick hedge of Thorns.

4. Lastly, are we as Lillies amongst Thorns? Oh what need we have to walk warily and to make streight steps to our feet. It is the use that deviut Bernard makes of it. Vide quomodo caute ambules inter Spins, how warily doth the man fet his foot, that treads amongst Thorns; how lightly doth he tread upon the ground where Thorns grow: Please of mundu Spinis, the world is full of Thorns, tis all but one great Thicket. O 1. Tread lightly upon it. the less you have to do with it, the less pricking of Thorns you will feel. The harder you tread upon the world the more you intangle yourfelves in it, the more you are in the thorns the more the thorns will run into the fleth, yea into your Spirit. 2. Treed warily Plat. 20. L. in it I faid (faith David) I will look to my ways --- while the wicked are in fight. Take heed of feandalous actions, take heed of suspected actions of things that have an ill report, &c. you walk among Thorns. The men of the world watch for your halting ! Oh les them not fee it ! But this is enough to have spoken to this verse,

Cant. 2. 3.

to by the Tenoretter in the vertil !

As the Appletree amongst the Trees of the Wood, so is my Beloved among the Sons: I sate under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet unto my taste.

THE laft day we heard the Beloved, [The Lord Jefus Chrift,] I telling his Spoufe [his Church and every touly believing Sout,] That the was as a Lifty amongh Thomas, a white innocent Lifty amongh wicked and ungodly men, that are always like gain-vous Thorns, and pricking Briars to the house of Ifrael. In this verse the replies upon him again. As the applement amongh the verse of the Wood, so is my Beloved amongh the Same. Then he fate under his feadow with great delight, and his finite was pleafast ones her table. Before I fall to parcelling out the text into such Propositions as it will naturally fall into; let me take notice of some few things.

E. 2

Bernard.

He had compared her to the most excellent slower, she now compareth him to the most excellent Tree; she was in his eyes, a Lilly amongst Thorns, he was in her eyes as an Appletree amongst the Trees of the Wood: There's none so excellent in Christs eyes as the true Believer, none so excellent in the Believers eyes as Jesus Christ. There is no love lost betwixt these two lovers, her love is not lost upon him, for who hath given unto the Lord first? who can say they are on the forehand with him? his love is not lost upon her, for it begets a love in her unto him; he indeed hath out-matched his Saints in Love. But their Souls press hard after God, they can say with Peter, Lord I thou that knowest all things, knowest I love thee.

2. He had told her she was a Lilly amongst Thorns, in the midst of a grievous afflictive World, that would be no kinder to her, than the Thorn to the Lilly; she presently subjoins: Ar an Appletree amongst the Trees of the Wood, so is my Beloved amongst the Sons; I sate under his Shadow with great delight, and his Fruit was pleasant to my Taste. It is as much as to say: Lord, though I be amongst Thorns, yet thou art a sufficient refreshing to me, so long as I can sit under thy Shadow, I shall live, yea and have delight. If I can get no meat in the world that pleaseth me, yet shall thy sruit be pleasant to my taste. I know that in the world I shall have trouble, but in thee I shall have peace; I will sit down under thy shadow with great delight.

Cald. paraph. John 16.

3. Thirdly, the feemeth here to have a prospect of an incarnate Saviour. For mark it, the faith not as an Appletree, but as an appletice amongst the Trees of the Wood. I know that Interpreters do much abound in their various Senses of the term Some in the Some understand Angels and Glorified Saints, T the glorified Sons of God Tothers understand the Saints; I Incline to their fense who Interpret it the Sons of Adam, the Sons of the World, It is an expression faith Bernard, non que attolitur majestas, fed commendator bumilitary by which the humility of Christ is more commended than his Majeffy exalted; non boo loca predicator magning Dominus et laudabilis nimis, fed parous Dominus & amabilis nimis. Indeedit is an incarnate Christ to whom we are beholden for all our fresh forings, for all our refreshing shadows, for all the fruits of Grace and Divine Confolation, with which our poor Souls are made glad . It is God manifested in the flesh, that is the Saviour of the World. But that I may come close to the Text, you have in its 1. The

2. The Sponfes commendation of Christ; under the similitude of an Appletree amongst the trees of the Wood, 2. The Sponfes application and improvement of him, and that in two things, 1. I fate under his shadow with great delight, 2. His fruit was pleasant unto her taste.

The Text fairly falleth into these three Propositions.

Prop. 1. That Jefus Christ is to the believing Soul, as the Appletree amongst the tree of the Wood.

Prop. 2. That a Believer fits under the shadow of Christ with great deliabt.

Prop. 3. That Christs Fruit is exceeding pleasant to a believers

tafte.

Prop. 1. That Fefus Christis to the believing Soul as the Appletree amongst the trees of the Wood. This is not the only place where Christ is compared to a Tree, Rev. 2.7. He is that Tree of Life, in the midit of that paradife of God, which be that overcometh shall eat of. That tree of Life which Saint John faw, Rev. 21, 1, 2. on either fide of the River, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded ber fruit every moneth, and the leaves of the tree were for the bealing of the nations. But here Christ is not compared to a Tree in the general notion of it, but to a particular Species of trees, 77973. Let me open the similitude a little. Interpreters do generally agree that it fignifies the superlative excellency of Christ: That Christ was more to her than all the earth besides : The world is but a great wood. The feveral persons and things therein are the trees of this Wood, Now look as the Appletree is amongst the trees of the Wood, far more excellent than them all, so is Christ in the Believers eye; Quantum preftat malus inter arbores, (faith Mariana, and irdeed all Interpreters do agree in it,) so that the sense is, Christ is more to me, more worth, more excellent than all the World befides. There are Angels in Heaven, they are excellent creatures; but Christ is more excellent than they; there are Saints upon the earth, they are excellent too, but Christ is more excellent than all his Saints; there are Cedars in Lebanon, great and gay persons: The King of Affyria, is likened to a Cedar in Lebanon, under whose Bodow dwelt all great Nations. Ezek. 31. 3, 6. And Nebuchamezzar is likened to a tree strong and bigh, under which the Beasts of the earth dwelt. But as the Appletree excelleth all the trees of the Wood; fo Christ (to a Believers Soul) excelleth all the persons and things of the world : The Soul cries out none but Chrift, none but Christ.

2. But Secondly; The similitude will guide us a little surther, in the discerning the particular excellencies of Christ above all the World besides. Let us follow it a little, and see yet more particularly how Christ to the believing Soul is as the Appletree amongst the trees of the Wood: The Appletree is famous for two things.

1. Fruitfulness. 2. Shadow, and in respect of both excels all the trees of the Wood. I will inlarge the notion no surther, and for this latitude, we have not only the evidence of experience, but also a foundation in the text, where both these are instanced in.

1. For fruitfulness: There are thousands of trees in the Wood but the Appletree excels them all; fome are barren Trees, of little use but for the fire; some are timbertrees, and of better use: Some are fruitful Trees but inferiour to the Appletree: they bring forth acorns, and maft for Swine, but no fruit fit for mans-cating; others bring forth fruit, which man may cat, but it is noxious and burnful; But in three things doth the Appletree, (as to its fruitfulness) excel the best trees in the Wood. 1. In the variety of its fruit : There are leveral kinds of Apples. 2. In the pleafantness of it. 3. In the wholeformefr of it. Apples are a cordial fruit, and of great ufe. In the great wood of the World, there are a great many Trees; fome are altogether barren, they bring forth no fruit but what is poisonous; all the fruits of their Lives, are oppression, violence, extortion, Covetouines, Prunhenness, Uncleanness, Curfing, Blafbbeming the pretious word of God; others there are that bring forth fome Fruit, but 'tis no better then acorns, maft for bogs: what's the end of their lives, but to add house to house that there be no room left upon the earth, to heap up Riches as the duft? A third fort they bring forth fruit that is fomething better, they are just and chaft, moral, temperate men. There is a fourth fort that bring forth excellens fruit; the fruit of the Spirit, Love, Joy, Peace, Holinefe, Righteonfrieff. &c. Ah! but there is none that brings forth fruit like to Christ: as the Appletree amongst the trees of the Wood. fo is thrift amongft all the fons; Cetera ligna umbram babent for latit non vite reflectionem, non falutis fructus perpetuos. Other Trees bring forth fome refreshment to their Brethren; but none refresheth them with life.

1. None shat brings forth so much fruit, and such variety as Christ doth, he is the tree of Life which brings forth twelve manner of Fruits, numerus certus pro incerto. One Christian is fruitful by infruition.

Aruction, another by prayer, a third by ministring to the necessities of poor Saints, a fourth by an exemplary life, but Christ helps every way. Oh! the variety of fruit that groweth upon this tree of life! effectual Calling, Justification, Regeneration, Santification, Adoption, Strength, Quickening, comforting Grace, all that a Christi-

an lives upon, all groweth upon this Tree.

2. Secondly, no fruit fo pleafant as that which grows upon this Tere. Tell me, O you that have tafted how good the Lord is, was ever fruit like his fruit? you that have tafted of the powers of the life to come, that know what it is to have your iniquitles forgiven, and your Sins covered, did ever any thing tafte fo fweet to your Souls? you that ever taited the Spirit of Regeneration, and found a new heart in your felves, was ever any thing fo fweet unto you? you that have found the ftrengthenings of Grace unto any duty, under any Temptation, that have found any quicknings of the Spirit of Christ; in thort, any thing of dittinguishing Grace, ary fruit of which you have any certain evidence that it came from Christ, and was the fruit of this Appletree, did ever any trees of the Wood bring forth any like this? you it may be have been thaking the Tree of wordly Traffick, and it hath dropt Silver and Gold upon your or shaking the trees of the Earth, and they have dropt Honour or Pleafare: but was ever any of them like to thefe joys ? this is the peace that paffeth understanding. You it may be have had much fweet converse with Friends in the world, much with the Saints of God in the world, and all have been very sweet; but was ever any like an hour's intimate communion, like a day's fellowship with Jefus Christ?

3. No fruit so wholesome, as that which comes from this Appletree; for the fruit of Lusts and Corruptions, hath it not been like the fruit of that Appletree of which Eve eat? it was indeed fair to the eye and enticed you to pluck and Eat: but what good did it do her? it brought forth the curse upon Adam, upon Eve, upon the earth for their sakes. The wages of Sin is death; (saith the Apostle, Rom. 6:) and again: What fruit had you of those things whereof you now are assumed? Worldly imployments, traffick and Trade, is a Tree, that brings forth fruit, the fruit of Riches and Honours, &c. But what wholesomness is there in this fruit, they commonly debauch the Soul, and they prosit nothing in the day of evil; in the day of death, whose shall these things be? in the day of wrath, they will not go in exchange for a Soul, nor ransom any one Soul from the pit of destruction.

These things now are like those trees of the Wood which bring forth some sruit, but such as is good for nothing. Christ is the true Appletree, that brings forth that fruit, which is not only pleasant to the Soul, but wholesome for the Soul. Ah! how wholesome is the fruit of Julistication to a poor lost condemned Soul! how wholsome is the bealing of the Nations to a poor Soul wounded with the sense of Sin! But this is enough to have inlarged upon the first thing. Christ is an Appletree amongst the trees of the Wood for fruitfulness, especially considering that I shall have a further opportunity to discourse particularly, concerning this subject when I speak to the last branch of the Text.

2. Secondly; As an Appletree amongst the trees of the Wood for Shadow, so is Christ amongst the Sons. There are other trees in the Wood which cast a Shadow besides the Appletree, but none like that tree, that wherein it's Shadow excelleth is the pleasant-ness of it, pleasantness to the eye, pleasantness to the smell: and 3. He that chuseth the Appletree for his Shadow, doth not only meet with a refreshing Shadow, which protects him from the heat; but a nutritive shadow, he may both sit in the Shadow, and also eat of the Fruit, and refresh himself. Such is Christ to the believing Soul.

1. He is a pleafant Shadow, you have it in the following words. I fate under his Shadow with great delight, or as it is in the Heb. I delighted under bis Shadow, The world doth sometimes (yet not often 1 afford a hadow to pious, believing Souls. I fay not often; for 'and to word, for the most part, those that in it will live godly must fuffer persecution: but sometimes it doth afford a Shadow, but alas it is like Tonahs Gourd, it comes up in a night, and it goes down and withers in a night. The kindness of the world to those that walk close with God, is ordinarily but a politick kindness. And truly for the most part it is but an unpleasant Shadow. Lot found a Shadow amongst the Sodomites, but his righteous Soul was vexed with their nuclean conversation. The Ifraelites found a Shadow in Egypt under which they were protected; but they contracted a disease there, which the nation never gat of I mean their apish inclination to Idolatry which proved their ruine at last. A Child of God sometimes finds some shelter under the trees of the World. but it is an unpleasant shadow. The Shadow of Christ is that alone which is pleasant to the Gracious Soul. He that in the midft of all the Hears and Tempefts of the world, can dwell in the Secret of the most bigh, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

That can fay of the Lord, be it my refuge, and my fortress, my God in bim will I truft; he shall tread upon Lions and Adders, and trample young Lions under bir feet. He that can live the life which he lives in the flesh upon Faith in the Son of God, Gods truth shall be his field and buckler, as for his enemies he fall puff at them; living upon a Providebit Deus, and rejoycing upon this dilemma. God will either feeure me, or take me up into Glory, and in this confidence he shall walk chearfully, and laugh at the heats of the world; yea and

at deftruction itfelf, when it threatneth him.

2. Secondly, as he that chufeth the Appletree for his shadow, hath not a meer shelter, but a refreshing too, the shadow of the tree theltreth bim, and the fruit of the Tree nourifieth bim. So is Christ to the believing Soul; he that in an evil time, gets under this Appletree, and fhadows himfelf by Faith in Fefus Chrift, is not meerly protetled from the evil or rather from the evil of the evil; but is nourished. The exercise of Faith, doth not only cover and shelter the Soul; but advantageth the Soul in Spiritual life and strength, Grace groweth by exercise. The Soul feeds upon Christ, (his flesh you know is meat indeed, and bis blood is drink indeed) while it shelters it self under his wings ; Faith by the same Ad protedeth and nourisheth a believing Soul. But I have inlarged enough in the explication of the Metaphor, let me now come to the Application of the Miftery, couched under this Metaphor.

First, what an incouragement here is to every Soul to Ule to come to Fesus Christ. This is the end both of our preaching and of your hearing, we preach to you, that we may bring you to Christ, (otherwise we do but beat the Air) you come forth to bear, that you may by the hearing of the Ear be drawn to Christ, (else you lofe all your labour and your time were better fpent at home.) Now what argument more efficacious to this noble end, than this drawn from the transcendent excellency of the Lord lesus Christ? Man is a Sociable Creature, and his active Soul never loves to be alone; but will be united to fomething: Nav. to a meceffitous Soul, ordered to fuch a ftate in this Life, that it is full of wants. Hence, there's no man born, but affoon as his Soul begins to put forth itself in rational acts, it is presently inquiring for fomething to be united to. One mans Soul is low-born, and views the gay-things of the World; after these it makes, it longs, it thirsts, for these it works night and day. The Summa totalis of all the thoughts of his heart is; Oh bow may I be rich! great in the

World! how may I get into the Favour of Princes and Nobles and come to Honour! But there is another worse than this all its thoughts are, how may I fatisfy my bafe fenfuel lufts ? pleafe my eye with feeing, my ear with hearing, &cc. A third fees Learning and Knowledg, and apprehends an excellency in them; after these he makes and all his care and study is, how he might abound in the Knowledg of all things from the Cedar to the Hyfor : This is a more Noble Soul than the other is. But I will frem you a more excellent way, a more excellent object, and that is Christ, Union with Chrift, and yet ah! how few are those Souls that fay: How should I get my Share in Christ? Every Tree in the Wood of the World hath many travellers fitting under it; but the Appletree very few. There's a tree of Senfuality: A Tree whole fruit are the Apples of Sodem and of Gomorrab. The Alchoufe, the whorehouse, the dancing-places, the Playhouses, they are all but boughs of this Tree, Ah Lord, how many fit under this tree, and the feveral boughs of it with great delight! how sweet is the fruit of it to their tafte, yet the shadow of it deadly, and the fruit it bears is poilon. There is a tree of Worldly preferment and Honour; how many thousand Travellers are waiting under this tree? The boughs of it are the great men of the World, how many are waiting on their Shadow! and yet alas, what is the shadow of man worth? what's the fruit of these things worth? A good Tempest of Gods wrath upon the Conscience, breaks through all these boughs. The woman cries, Help O King; but he answers if God helps not how can I belt? There is a tree of worldly business and Secular Imploye ment; this hath a thousand boughs, the fruit it bears is Gold and Silver, and house and lands; there are many Souls, that are daily waiting under this tree. There is a Tree of worldly wifdom and Knowledg and Learning, this grows in the more cultivated parts of the Earth, Universities, Schools of Learning, &c. and there are many under this tree. But there is a tree of life, the Lord Fefus Chrift, whole fruit is for meat, and his leaves are for medicines and where's the Soul that inquireth for this tree, or how it may come to tafte of his fruit or to fit under his shadow; though, compazed with other trees, he be as the Appletree amongst the trees of the Wood, far excelling them all? But give me leave to plead with you by a threefold Argument.

1. All the trees of the Wood bring forth no such fruit as this tree doth. Saint John calls all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh.

and the luft of the eyes, and the pride of Life. See here all the fruit John 2, 16. that groweth upon the trees of the Wood; one man purfueth his pleasure, and what's the fruit? Satisfaction to the outward fenfe, he pleafeth his eye with a fine fight, his car with a fine found, his pallat with a fine tafte of meat or liquors, and here's all he gets. and what doth it all fignify? Another man pursueth his profit; Suppose he gets his desire, what hath he? a bag of Gold or Silver, a fine House and Land a brave Orchard and Garden, when he dies whose shall these things be? while he lives, what are they good for more than to keep Life and Soul together! what's the Soulthe better for being mafter of a brave effate! what do his hundreds a year fignify as to the inriching of his nobler part, or purchasing an everlafting habitation! A third man purfueth Honour and Preferment; suppose he climbeth this tree, he is in danger of falling at every new guft of wind; while he abideth, he is but the mark of envy, he hath nothing but a Cap and a Knee, and a great Title: Another pursueth Learning and Knowledg. Tis true this comes nearer a Souls happiness, than the other low things do: but consider the Soul as ordained to an eternity, and what doth all this profit? a man may go to Hell with all his Learning and Knowledgs do any of these trees bear pardon of Sins, peace with God, joy in the boly Ghoft? This is the fruit, that is necessary for an immortal Soul: Methinks there's the fame proportion betwixt this fruit of the Appletree and all the fruit of the trees of the World, that there is betwixt the meat on your Tables, and the fruit that comes on when you have dined: the fruit doth well, but it would be fad with you, if you had no other meat to eat; the meat is necessary, the fruit might be spared, nay ordinarily it doth hurt. The fruit of the Appletree is meat for the Soul, the Soul lives by Christ, it cannot live without him. If once Christ be affured to the Soul, if it hath once by Faith received him, Learning, Riebes, Honours, may do well; yet even then, they oft do more hurt than good, but these without a Christ what are they? I remember when Saul would take off his Servants from following David, he useth this Argument to them : Hear now you Benjamites, will the Son of Feffe 2 Sam. 22. 7. give every of you Fields and Vineyards, and make you all Captains of Thousands and Capains of Hundreds? give me leave to cry out, hear me O you men of the World, you that run after the pleasures and profits of ity can Riches, Pleafmer, Honours, Loorning, can any thing in the world, being you pardon of Sin, peace with God, comfort

comfort upon a death-bed; joy when you are upon the brink of eternity? Christ can do all this, how is it then that you conspire against your own good, and come not to Christ for all this?

2. Argument.

Confider Secondly, That all the trees of the Wood coft no fuch fordow The world is an open place and those that walk in as Christ doth. it, are exposed to Sun, and Wind and Weather : There are storms from the world, and there are Storms from God. There is an heat of worldly opposition and enmity, and there is a scorching heat of divine wrath upon the inward man, to which those that walk in the world are exposed. It stands all in hand to look for a shadow, a shelter for an evil day, and to be providing a Tabernacle from the Sun and from the beat. There's none of you fo rich, but you may be poor; none so high, but you may be low; none so outwardly happy but you may be miserable. The world many a time quarrels with her own, and plucks the feathers which the hath given. The rich man is brought to beggary, and the honourable man becomes contemptible, oft-times God arms a mansthoughts against him, his Conscience condemns him, his secret thoughts terrify him. At fuch a time as this can all the trees in the Wood shadow you? Christ can at fuch a time, a time of poverty and contempt, a time of mifery and affliction; you shall sit under his shadow with a great delight, and be at rest. Let this be a fercond Argument to commend unto you earnest indeavours after the Lord Jesus Christ, as he brings forth the best fruit, so he yields the beft Shedow.

3. Argument,

Thirdly, Confider you shall with as little Labour get under the Appletree as under any other Tree of the Wood; if indeed I had all this while been shewing you an inaccessible good, you might be discouraged. I have been shewing you a tree that standeth in the Paradife of God, but if this tree be (like the Garden of Paradife) guarded with a flaming Sword, that none can come near it, this may yet be a remora; but it is not fo. The Appletree I have shewed you is amongst the trees of the Wood, Christ is amongst you; He offereth himself to you this day by me his Minister; wisdom cries to you in the freets; you are invited to Christ, you are incouraged by his word that those who come he will in no-ways cast away. I have heard that it was faid once by a great person in this Nation about to fuffer death: If I had ferved my God with balf that Fidelity that I have ferved my prince, I had not come to this untimely end. I shink I may fay of Thousands in the World : If they had purfued Heaven.

Heaven and an Interest in Christ, with half that diligence which they have used that they might be rich, and great, and honourable, they might have had their thares: Now, O when will all the fools of the world be wife? I shall thut up this use with the words of the Prophet in that known text. Ho every one that thirftesh come you to the waters, and be that bath no money, come you buy and eat. yea come buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your Isa. 55. v. 1,2. tabour for that which sufficeth not ? bearken diligently to me and eat that which is good, and let your Soul delight itself in fatnefs.

In the second place, Is Christ as the Appletree amongst the trees of

the Wood to his Saints? let them learn then:

1. To be content with bim alone. This is an hard leffon to flesh and blood, to be fatisfyed with a naked Christ, but should not this fatisfy, that thou haft that that is Chrift, worth all; envy them not. that are got under the Cedars of the World, into the favour and bofomes of Princes, they are fet in flippery places : Nor them that are got under the Oaks of the World; those trees drop nothing but acorns, mast for Swine, they get wealth and Riches; but alas, the Soul cannot live on these things. Thou art under the Appletree: The voice of the Lord breaketh the Cedars, the Lord breaketh the Cedars in Lebanon (faith the Pfalmift.) The wrath of God may break the Cedars, and break the Oaks, and then what becomes of them that fit under their Shadows ? But the voice of the Lord shall never break the Appletree. Remember the words of the Pfalmift. Pfal: 2: 11. Kifs the Son left be be angry, and you periff from the way: when bis wrath is kindled but a little, bleffed are all they that puttheir truft in him.

2. Learn of the Spoule here. Sit under Chrifts fhadow with great delight, and let bis fruit be pleafant to your tafte; but this will fall un-

der the two other doctrines of the text.

1. The believing Soul fits under Christs shadow with great delight.

2. Christs fruit is exceeding pleasant to the taste of a believing Soul.

Cant. 2. 3.

I fate under bis Shadow with great delight, and his fruit was pleafant unto my tafte.

TE have heard the Spouses commendation of her Beloved the last day, the compared him to the Appletree amongst the trees of the Wood. We come now to confider her Improvement, and Application of the notion, that I told you was in two particulars: 1. I fat under bis Shadow with great delight. 2. His fruit was pleasant to my Tafte. In two things (I told you the last day,) the Appletree exceeded all the trees of the Wood.1. In its Shadow; 2. In its fruitfulnefs: the Spoule instanceth in both. As to the Shadow, the faith, the fat under the Shadow of this Appletree with great delight. The Heb. is in his Shadow, I have defired or I have delighted, and I have fat down.

The Vulg. Lat. reads it, Under his Shadow whom I defired, I fat down, some little verbal difference there is in some other verfions. Some Interpreters observe an ancient usage at weddings for a Canoby to be carried over the Bride, and to that they think those phrales of spreading the skirt over her (mentioned Ruth 3. 9. Ez. 16. 8.) to allude; and they think that the Spoule in the text, speaketh with some allusion to that. But being we have a nearer deduction of the Metaphor in the text, I conceive we need not fetch it fo far; the had before likened him to the Appletree: Trees we know cast a Shadem, and their shadow is a refreshing to the weary Traveller. The Proposition is this:

Prop. The believing Soul fits under Christs shadow with great de-

light.

In the fuller pursuit of this Proposition, I shall do these things.

1. We will inquire what is here meant by the Shadow of Christ.

2. What is meant by the Spouses sitting down under the Shadow of Christ.

3. Whence is it that the Spoule finds fuch a delight, in fitting under the Shadow of Christ?

4. What Application we may make of this Proposition.

1. Qu. What is here meant by the Sh adop of Chrift?

A Shadow is an affection of the Air deprived of some degrees of Light, by the interposition of some gross and darker body. It is considerable in the cause and in the effect. The cause of it is some grosser darker body, interposing betwixt the Sun and that part of the earth which is shadowed; the shadow is the effect of such an interposition: Now the Sun being not only, the sountain of light, but also a great cause of bears, by how much its influence upon any spot of ground is more hindred, by so much is that place, rendered more cool and respecting unto the traveller. And in regard of the daily and circular motion of the Sun, the shadow varieth and altereth, and is one-while on this side, another-while on that side according to the aspect which the Sun hath upon that body which casteth the shadow as it deprive the place of the rays and beams of the Sun.

1. This is the litteral notion of a Shadow. From which there are feveral metaphorical usages of it in Scripture: 1. Sometime, (and that most ordinarily,) it signifieth Protection, and thus very often applied to men, Gen. 19. 8. Judg. 9. 12 IJ. 30. 2. And very often to God: you read of the Shadow of the Almighty, Pfal. 91. 1. the Shadow of Gods wings, Pfal. 17. 8. Pfal. 36. v. 7. Pfal. 57. 1. Pfal. 63. 7. Thus the promise is to be understood, IJ. 4. 6. And there shall be a Tabernacle, for a shadow in the day-time, & IJa. 25. 4. Thou hastbeen a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the best.

2. In regard of the incertainty of a shadow, and the often varying of it (according to the aspect which the Sun hath upon the thing that interposeth betwixt the earth and it,) a shadow often significant mutability and inconstancy, and the life of man is compared to a shadow, 1. Chron. 29.15. Job 8. 9. Job 14. 2. Job 17.7. &cc. But I shall not insist upon this notion as by no means applicable here, for herein doth Christs shadow excel all others as I shall shew you.

Thirdly, in Regard that a shadow doth ordinarily come before the Sun, and as the Sun riseth higher or goeth surther in the Firmament, so the shadow vanisheth. This Metaphor of a shadow is also used in Scripture, to signify the typical ordinances of the Law, which did presigure the Lord Jesus Christ, and were abolished upon his manisestation in the sless: thus Col. 2. 17. 2nd Heb. 8. 3, and 10.06. 1.

1. These various usages and applications of this Metaphor have given

given a latitude to Interpreters, to abound in feveral interpretati-

ons of this text.

1. Some by the shadow of Christ, understand the legal dispensation in opposition to that of the Gospel. Sumus sub meliore umbra (saith Hierom.) The sews were under shadows, their whole Service was but a shadow of things to come. Those carnal typical Ordinances were all as shadows of things to come, and presigured a Christ that was to come: now the sewish Church sate under the shadow of Christ with great delight; Christ saith, Rom. 8. Abraham saw my day and rejoyced. It was a pleasant thing to that ancient people of God to meditate of a Christ to come, and when they slew their Lambs for Sacrisice to think of that Lamb of God presigured by those offerings, who was to be slain that he might take away the sins of the World. We now are but under a shadow: the Apostle saith, that

me fee but in a glafs darkly. But ours is a better shadow.

2. Others by the Shadow of Christ understand his Protedion ; To Aquinas, umbra Christi protectio est divinitatis. The shadow of Christ is the protection of Christ; but Christ is to be considered in a double notion: As God over all bleffed for ever. And thus the protection of Christ is the protection of God, and the shadow of Christ is but the shadow of the Almighty; the Covert of his wings of which you read to often in Scripture especially in the book of Pfalms 2. He may be considered as God manifested in the flesh, as the Meffiah of the world. And thus the hadow of Christ, is that protection and shelter which floweth or ariseth to the Soul, from a Christ incarnate: Umbra ejus caro ejus, umbra fides (faith Bernard.) Look as the shadow protects the Traveller from the heat and scorching beams of the Sun; so God manifested in the stelly, the Lord Jesus Christ, protects the Soul from the scorching heat of divine wrath: and thus we have found out what the Shadow of Christ is, it is his Protection, that Protection which floweth from him as God, and that shelter and refuge which ariseth from him as God manifested in the flesh. I shall not meddle with the first concerning the Church under another dispensation, but shall chiefly direct my discourse to the second notion, and by this shadow of Christ understand his protection and that shelter which he affords to the Soul in this life; which I may diffinguish.

1. Into the Protection of special Providence, by which God more specially (for Christs sake) covers, & protects his people from those storms which that place which we call the world is subjected to.

2. The Protection of special distinguishing Grace, by which the Soul is feetred from those heats and storms, to which the Souls of men and women are subjected by reason of fin, both from God, as a just revenging Judg, and from Satan as a malicious molething advertary, and from the re-verberations of our own Confciences which have a natural power of troubling us with their reflections. But this is enough to have fpoken to the first thing. to give you a true notion of the shadow of Christ; the second thing I have to fpeak to is.

2. Q . What is this to fit under the fhadom of Chrift, with great

delight 2 of my say a live I say

This notion of fining implieth or importeth rather three

things. 1 . Application; and 2 . Reft 2. Pleafare.

1. Application, As the weary Traveller when the Sun beats upon him, applies himself to the shadow of some tree, so doth the believing Soul apply refelf to Christ. It is not more natural for the weather-beaten Traveller to feek for the shadow, than for the mind full of fears and diffurbances to feek for some security for itself, and make fultable Applications; as in an hot day or in a stormy time you thall fee all those who have occasions abroad in the Fields, running their feveral ways one to this tree, another to that tree; fo when-ever a day of evil comes or is like to come nature and reason directs every man to look for fome Provision for himself. The Ifraclites ranto the fisdow of Egypt, If go. 2. the Mabites flood ander the shadow of H. shbon, Jer. 44. 45. Now whiles the men of the world run one way, another, another way; the believer runs to God and to Christ Jesus, and gets under the Appletree. See holy David, Pfal. 32. v. 7. Thou art my biding place, thou shalt preferve me from trouble, and encompass me with Songs of deliverance. Again, Pfal. 119. 114. Thou art my biding-place, and my fhield, I hope in thy Prov. 18. 10. word Plat 20. 7. Some truft in Charets, and fome in Horfes; but me will remember the name of the Lord our God.

Secondly; Sedere eft quiefcere, (faith Bernard;) fitting is the posture of reft. The believer doth not only in a day of trouble betake himself to Christ, but he is et reft when he hath done that, when he hath once got to the Rock that's higher than he; he fits, and fings, and laughs at the waves that are below. The Church in Habbakuk, Chap. 3. v. 17, 18, refolves to rejoyce in the Lord, and to joy in the God of ber Salvation; and this in a day when the figtree did not bloffome, and there was no fruit in the Vene. Tis one thing

to apply our felber unto God in an evil cime, another thing to fit down in that application, i.e. to have our mind at sell and fatisfied, that our own thoughts shall no longer disturb us, but this is im-

ported in this phrase.

3. Yes and it is advantaged by that other phrase 'Inton we translate it, with great delight. The Heb is, I defired and I face down in it, which is capable of another interpretation; for this defire may be either confidered in the Soul, as previous to her fitting down, or the confequent ofit ; if in the first fenfe this is the fubflance. In the day of evil, all my defire was after Christmand I obtained my defire, thus the Arabick : I wished to get into his shadow, and I had my with, I fate down under it. So the Vale, Lat. Ifate down under the fludow of bim whom I defired : There is truth in this. In an evil day the believer defires no more but Christ : let him but fpeak kindly to hers let him but fet his feal upon the believers Soul, and his Soul cries; It to enough Lord. But our translation you fee reads it otherwise, and the Original will bear is well enough. I fate down under bie fosdom with great delight. I was as well pleafed with the affurance of Gods lave, on in the descrife of my Faith, as if I had the greatest femble feourity, or objects of femble ning their feveral ways on to this ree at fatisfaction.

3. Qu. Whence is it that the believing Soul fits under the fooder of Christ with so great delight? whence is it that the believer rous to this shadow? 2. That the believer takes so much Delight, and Satisfaction in

1. The reason of the first is the believers affer one; Then there is no stadow like the shadow of Christ. Reason dictates to every one in a day of evil, to make the best provision that he can for himself the Traveller chuseth the best provision that he can for himself the Best Sanctuary: Reason revoketh the believer to do the like Nature teacheth him this first general; indeed Grace teacheth him to discern Christ to be the best shadow. This he knows because he believeth the Word of God which saith thus much: Shall I open this a little I did it in part the last day; when I compared the shadow of the Appletree to Christs shadow: but I shall open it in two or three more particulars now.

1. The believer knows that note but Christa hadan can shaker the inward man, the believing Soul is one whom Grace bath thus far improved to confider. That the Soul is the buff and middle part of man. The Philosopher law a little of this, but also ! how little

to that Soul that believes that the Soul of man is ordained to an etermiry of joy or mifery : hence he rationally concludes if a florin comes. that that fladow is best which will defend the inward man; now this no hadow in the world will do but that of Christ. Many a man in a day of evil runs to the findow of great perfons, and thinks they are fafe, and it may be they are fo; but 'tis only as to their outward concerns; alas they cannot keep their mind from the torments of fears and forrows and discontents: but this Christ can do he can make the Soul glory in Tribulation, hung the Prifon, take joyfully the Speiling of goods, &cc.

2. The believer knows, That 'is the fladow of Christ alone, that can keep him from the beat of Gods wrath and Satans malice; he juffly apprehends, that there are no fcorchings, like the fcorchings. of Conscience by the wrath of God; no storms, like those that are made by the Prince of the Air when God lets him loofe: But Christ doth all this, he is the Screen that stands betwixt a poor Soul and Hell-fire, betwixt the wrath of God and the Confei-

ence de.

2. Thirdly he knows that all other hadows are but hadows, as they are sometimes little thelters for men and women, so they are like shadows that flee away. The tree that one-while is an excellent shadow, when the Sun comes about, becomes useless. Jonabe Gourd was a fine shadow, but it went down in a night; and then the Sun beats hot upon the poor man's head, and he is weary of his life again. "Man formetimes proves a fine shadow to his neighbour ; but alas! his breath is in his noftrils. Joseph in Egypt was a rare fladow to the Ifraelites, but a fladow that fled away. There arefe a King in Egypt, that knew not fofeph, and then the Ifraelites wanted a shadow: within these few years last past, how many brave fladows (to look on) have men fare under, and all now fled away ? But now Christ is a shadow that fleeth not away : God promised his people a King that should reign in righteenshelf; (it was Christ under the type of Hexekiah,) and he should be 1/2. 32. 1, 2. --- A vbe fordow of a great Rock in a weary land. The fladow of a great Rock is durable; there are boles in the Rock wherea man may hide in all weathers. If a. 4 6. He is called a Tabernacle for a finder at the day time from the heat. A tree for a shadow is one thing the leaves of it may wither and fall off, the boughs may be cut of the Sun may pierce through; but the Tabermacle is a lafting thefree mowonder then that the believer prefers this fladow before any other fhadow. 2. The

2. The reason of the Souls delight in this shadow is twofold:

1. The excellency of it. 2. The sweetness of it.

r. The excellency of it, security is that which the Soul hunts after, that's the good which it seeks out in an evil day; now the more it hath attained, the more it naturally rejoyceth; as the Soul doth naturally triumph, more according to the nature of the good which it hath attained, and the degree of its union to it. Hence the Soul having got under the most excellent shadow doth naturally sit under it with a great delight.

2. Again, as I showed you the last day, it is the sweetest and most profitable shadow. Catera ligns umbram babent solasii, non vite refectionem (saith Bernard.) The Soul that sits under the shadow of Christ hath not a meet protection, but the refreshings of Spiri-

tual life. But of this before; I come to the Application.

1. Learn from hence, the difference of the Righteom man from bis neighbour; and the excellency of the Righteom man above bis neighbour. The difference of his Act; the excellency of his State. The world is a place subjected to heats, by the wife God who hath ordered all things to his wife and glorious ends. Scrnetimes the beat comes from beaven more immediately; Sickness and great Mortalities, treubles of Spirit and terrors of Conscience. Sometimes they come from Hell, Temptations . &c. Sometimes, from the jarrings of the men of the world one with another. After a fine calm of Peace, healthy times, &c. Thele heats of troubles break out, and when they break out, men and women that are like men travelling in the world upon the great road to eternity: every one begins to run to a shelter, and feck for some shadow or other. One man gets under the shadow of some other Country. and there he thinks he shall be at rest; another chuseth some great person, and makes him his friendsone chuseth one madow another another. The believer he flieth to Christ, looks presently into the book of God to fee what promifes his Word hath for people in an evil time, and under the thelter of those promifes he creeps and is at reft : he faith with Luther, I will go and tell my God of it, and with David he commits himself unto God and he is at reft. He law bimfelf down and fleeps in peace because the Lord fustains him, and is not afraid of ten thoufands of people that have fet themselvesagainst bim round about not for the terror by night, nor the arrow that flieth at noon day, nor for the peffilence that walketh in darknefe nor for the defiredion that moffeth at noon; and why? Becouse be dwalleth in the

Pfal. 3. 4. Pfal. 91. 5.

Use 1.

Secret places of the most high, and abides under the Souther of the Almighty.

Secondly This thewest the excellency of the believers frate that he can fit under Chrifts fhadow. It is not given to every one, 'tis Bernard's note; the spoule faith Sedi, I have sate (in the singular number) nt agnofeat prerogativam, to acknowledg her prerogative. Every one cannot fit under the fladow of Chrift in an evil hour: many a poor wicked wretch, that hath lived under the neglect of God. and the contempt of Christ in the days of his Tranquillity and Prosperity, would gladly get under the Applitree when the florm comes; but Christ will not be a shadow unto him. You read of fome. Mat. 7. that in the day of Judgment, (that great day of heat) (hall fay Lord open unto us, bave me not prayed in thy name, and probbefyed in thy name, &c. to whom Christ shall fay, depart from me. I know you not you workers of iniquity, many who in that day hall ery unto the Rocks to cover them, and to the mountains to bide blem; yea and in this life there are many that boul upon their beds; (as the Prophet expresseth it;) when a day of evil comes, then they are at their Lord bave merey upon we but they can find no thelter under the wings of the Almighty; they are in Sunt condition. God answereth them not either by Uring or by Thuming Now here's the happiness of the Child of God, that at such a time as this is, he can fay with David, Pfal. 27 . v. 1. The Lord is my light and my Salvation, whom (hould I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom Should I be afraid?

In the second place, let me plead with you that sear the Lord to Use 2. come up to this place of duty, to six under the shadow of Christ with delight. The shadow is proper for, the heat; the World is a place subjected to many heats: I know not your respective conditions, the Sun may (for ought I know) heat hot upon some of your heads) possibly the growinds are withered that shadowed you. That which I would plead with your for is now to come and six under Christs shadow. It is (in plainer Scripture-phrase) to live the life of Faith in an evil time: Two things I would speak to you sors 1. To apply your selves to the Appletree, in my text. 2. Tasit under it with delight.

1. Apply your felves to this Appletters and to the fridge of it. Many feel prefent evils and are crying out what shall we do? that which I would call you all to is to some and it under this Apple-

tree :

tree. This word of application (as I term it,) will be dispatch-

ed in three things.

thook out those promifes which God bath made, for the refuge of his people at all sines: these are all but leaves of this Appletree, for they have their Yea and Amen in Christ. You will find in Scripture Promises of freeial Providence; the 91-Pfal. is full of them: you will find many more in holy writ, many good words of God wherein God hath engaged to take a special care of his people in evil times under fad dispensations: you will find promises of a divine prefence with his people in trials, strength under trials, deliverance out of them: you will find promises of Glory, and eternal Salvation, &c. all these are of excellent use to the people of God.

2. Your next work much be. To commit your Souls unto them. to believe in God, to trust in his word, to hope in his truth, &c. It is an excellent poffage that of Saint Peter, I Pot 4. 10. Wherefore let them that fuffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their Soute unto God in well-doing as unto a faithful Creator, as unto a faithful Creator. A Creator produceth a thing out of nothingsthis is an excellent Faith for a man to commit himself to God as to a faithful Creators Methinks it is like that noble Faith of Abrabame recorded by the Apostle to the Hebrews, Heb. 11. 19. By Faith Abraham offered up his Son, &c. accounting that God was a ble to raife bim from the dead. A man that commits himfelf to Gods care as to his Creatour, he never hath eye to probabilities nor means; but doth his duty, and believes that if God takes away his Name, his E fare, his Livelyhood, his Life, he will in faithfulness to His word create him a new Name, an Effate a Livelyhood, a new Life, whatfoever he wants.

Thirdly, Follow God by prayer. The Soul under the Appletree is much in prayer, mercies come in a way of duty; for these things (faith God) I will be inquired of by the boule of Israel. It is an excellent passage of David, Psal 109. 4. For my love they are my indversaries, bit I give my self-sw proper at was an hot time of the day with David, those to whom he had showed kindness were become his adversaries. The trees of the Wood would not shelter him, what doth he do? he applies himself to the Appletree (as at another since the inconsegrent himself in his God) well, but what means doth he inconsegrent himself in his God) well, but what means doth he inconsegrent himself in his God) well, but what means doth he inconsegrent himself in his God) well, but what means doth he inconsegrent himself in his God) well, but what means doth he inconsegrent himself in his God) well, but what means doth he inconsegrent himself in his God) well, but what means doth he inconsegrent himself in his God) well, but what means doth he inconsegrent himself in his God well, but what means doth he inconsegrent himself in his God well, but what means doth he inconsegrent himself in his God well, but what means doth he inconsegrent himself in his God well, but what means doth he inconsegrent himself in his God well, but what means doth he inconsegrent himself in his God well, but when he was a second well as a second wel

Secondly.

Secondly labour to fit under the Anderes with deliebs. This is now an hard faying who can bear it ? This cafe to respice in objects of Sense when we obtain our union with them But 'tis hard to delight in the objects of Faith: The truth is the latter is as easy as the former, were the work of Faith in us as frong and clear as the operation of Senfe. The reason why we cannot rejove in a good affured us by Promite, as well as in an object handled by Some, is because we believe faintly, and have our Faith incumbred with doubtings, which make our Souls union with the good imperfect. But Oh tabour for this, labour for the joy of faith! Think it a shame to your Souls, that when one of you hath been much troubled about your workfly concerns, and you have at last found out fome careful Lawyer that will take care of vour bufiness, or some powerful friend at Court that hath undertaken your Interest ithatthen you can diffinify it your thoughts and I though your cafe be fill depending) yet you can be merry and chearful, and please your felf that your whole Interest is under Such careful management s and that when you profess to have saft all your core upon God, and to have committed wourt cafes unto him that yet who cannot sit down under Christs hadow with delight, but your hearts must must yet be full of troubles and abxicties; what a) dishonour is this to God? What a needless diffurbance to your own Souls? and how thort of your duty in believing ! But'I thall aid no more to this and is Entrail life and Salvanian; the meant in order. see Samobit we forthe they are citier. i. The means of tunchale, of the

recens of deplication. Again, the means of Application are extented in Exercised which are this QE's ana or more interest of the same influence of his gradients against a local

And bis fruit was pleafant untomy Taffel to in

THE Spould is yet telling us, what improvement the made of the Appletree by reason of which the put an higher rate upon it then upon the trees of the Wood, a Ranbi field if he fate under it wish great delight, 2. As to its fruit the tells us his fruit was pleasant to her take: supposing what I have long fined laid for a foundation to all these discounters to That the belaudd it shroughout this Song what these discounters to That the belaudd it shroughout this Song what the Lord Jelus Christs and the Doube, the Church shore generally more particularly, are if the Britishing Soul.

The proposition dies before your road we are british of many believe in Soul.

I that specifie to this by way by it a Explication. It deplication. In the first we shall inquire what the life first is a What the believers take is, 3 Whent's is it that Christs fruit is so pleasant to a believers take.

1. Qu. What is Chrifts fruit? 1771.

The Heb, word '79 comes from 779 he hath brought forth fruit. The Latine Criticks fay that fruding is derived a ferendo or a fruendo, from bearing s fo that fruit is whatfoever the fields or plants in it bring forth : Or from enjoying, fo that whatforver any thing elfe brings forth to as, which we enjoy we call fruit. In the general notion therefore; The fruit of Christ is what sever Christ bath brought forth or done for m, or in m, for our advantage, any thing which we enjoy, from Christ, by vistue of any thing that he hath dine or suffered for my or doth in us or for us , all this is the fruit of Chrift. Hence it is that Interpreters fo much abound in the Interpretation of the terms I shall not restrain the notion but take it in the Latitude and open it to you in forne few particulars: I shall speak norhing of those more external Benefits which we have from Christ as Redcemers nor yet of what we have from him as he is one with his Father, Godbleffed for ever. I thall reftrain my discourse to Christ considered as God man our Lord and Saviour : And the Spiritual benefits which we have from him as fuch. Thefe fall under the double notion of the Means and the end. The end is Eternal life and Salvation; the means in order to this and are of two forts: they are either, 1. The means of purchase, or the means of Application. Again, the means of Application are either, 1. External which are his Ordinances, or more internal, viz. The Sawing influences of his gracious Spirit. Hence there is a fourfold fruit of Christ, that is fweet to the Believers tafte.

1. His alls of Redemption; all those acts of his by which began, and perfected, and is yet perfecting the Redemption of lost

Souls:30

as a All shofe Ordinances of Chrift, his facred appointments, in the ase of which be applied purchased Grace to bis peoples Souls.

3 All shofe inward Influences of the Spirit of Grace, by which

he doth effectually make the Soul partaker of his Grace.

Laffly, Bhat eternal Salvation, Life and Glory, which is the end to which Christhanh defigured his death, and appointed his Ordinances, and in order to which his holy Spirit workers. These are the fruit of this Appletee. I shall speak more distinctly to them by and by: but let us first enquire.

2. Qu. What is the believers Tafte?

The Heb. is, to my pallat, or to my James: The difference is hitle; the pallat is that part where the exteriour Sense, which we call the Tafte, doth its Office. The Tafte is an outward fenfe, by which a man doth discern the favors of things. Whether the Tongne or the Spirits be the instruments by which the Sense dischargeth its Office, is not of much concern to us. Here the term is used Metaphorically: as the mouth tafteth meat, fo the ear tryeth words, Job 34.3. the fruit mentioned here is Spiritual, fo the taffe is Spiritual. It is that inward power and faculty of the Soul, by which the Sout discerneth the goodness, and suitableness of a Spiritual objett: So the term is used, Pfal. 34. 8. Pfal. 119. 103. Now look as in the natural exercise of that Sense; there is, 1. A suitable application of the object to the instrument of the fense. 2. A Judgment upon the application: so in the Spiritual taste, there is, 1. An application of the Spiritual object. 2. There is a Judgment paffed by the Soul, upon the application.

1. The Believer tafteth the fruit of Chrift.

2. Upon the taste, the findeth is pleasant. I say first, there is an application of the Spiritual object: This is by 1. Knowledg.

2. Meditation. 3. Faith.

First I say by Knowledg, as God hath given to the body an hand, by which it taketh hold of the mear, and brings it to the mouth, before the mouth tasteth it, and the man judgeth of it; so God hath given to the Soul an intellectual power or faculty, by which it gaineth the Knowledg of intellectual objecti, whether meerly rational or moral, or heavenly and spiritual. When by the outward Senses the Soul hath heard of the discovery of any proper object, it sendeth torth its intellectual power or faculty to get a true Notion, and Knowledg of it.

2. The Second thing is Meditation; look as it is with the body, when the hand hath fetched meat, the mouth chemeth it, and upon the chewing of it the pallate (or the Soul by the pallate) judgeth of the Savor or Taste, the badness or goodness, the sweetness or sowreness or any other qualitie in it. So it is with the Soul, as to intellectual and spiritual objects, when once the Soul by the help of the understanding, hath gotten the Kuowledg of any Spiritual proposition, the mind by Meditation dwells upon it: This

is the Souls chewing of its food.

3. But thirdly, By Faith likewise the Sinl taftes the Spiritual

Wird; indeed it is never tafted till believed. The works of Redemption, the notion of Juftification, &c. are most excellent Spiritual objects; but until the Soul cometh to believe, i. a. To affent to those Propositions which concern them, (as unto Propositions of truth,) and to reft and rely upon the person of the Mediator, for the particular application of these things to the Soul; the Soul taffeth no more sweetness in them, than in the white of an Egg. But by thefe three acts the Soul taftes an intellectual object : When it hath tafted it Judgeth ; as ftill it is with the body. The hand brings the meat to the Month, the Mouth cheweth it, and then the Soul by the help of the pallat Judgeth. So it is with the Soul as to intellectual objects : First, the Soul gets the true notion of them, then it meditates upon them, and weighs them whether they be true or falle, good or bad; if the Soul finds them true it believes them, and fo judgeth of the favor, or goodnels of them. This now is the Believers Tafte; and when the Spouse faith, that Christs Fruit was pleasant tober Tafte, her saying may import thus much at length.

That baving beard of a Messian that was to come into the world, of what he was to do and suffer, and got a true notion of his excellency, and the suitableness of his alls of Grace to her tapsed condition, and believed what the Scriptures say concerning him, and in some measure experienced his goodness, his Gracious alls of Redemption, his Ordinances; by which his Redemption is particularly applyed to the Soul, his inward instances of Grace, and that eternal life Glory and Salvation, to which these serve as means, were all very pleasant to her. There may be another notion of Taste, as it significant to here but yet impersed; as he who but tastes meat hath but an impersed evidence of the goodness of it; he doth not know what it will prove in the helly. So the Metaphor is sometimes used to signify our (impersed) experience of things; thus Heb. 6.4, 5. 1 Pet. 2.3. I shall speak in the first place to the first notion of the Metaphor, and I will open and prove it a little further in all the aforementi-

oned particulars.

1. Christs redeeming Allions, are very sweet to a believers Taste, his Bicarnation, his Temptations; his allive Obedience, his Death, his Re-surrellion, his Ascension, his Intercession, his coming to Indoment, all these were the fruit of this Appletree, they are all sweet to the believers taste; sweet upon Meditation, sweet upon the Souls Application of them by faith. How sweet was Chisits Incornation to Abraham.

Abrahams safte ! Job. 8. 36. your Father Abraham rejoyced to fee my day, and be fan it and was glad. This was the first ripe fruit of she Meffiat : Abraham was the Father of believers, he faw Christs day by the eye of Prophely, he forefaw by the eye of Faith, he clearly and fixedly faw. That there would be a time when a Virgin Should conceive, and bring forth a Son whole name should be Emanu. el. God with us, he forefaw it, he believed it: It was fweet to his tafte. He rejoyced (faith our Saviour be mar glad Facob faw this and rejoyced when he prophefyed, that the Scepter should not depart from Judab, nor the Lawgiver from between bis feet until Shiloh came. and to bim (hould the gothering of the people be. If aish faw this day and rejoyced; when be foretold that a Virgin should conceive and. bear & Son. In short all the Saints of God, who lived from Adam to Moles, and from Moles till the coming of Christ, they all forefaw this fruit of the Appletree and they rejoyced; they rejoyced in hope, that there should be a time, when the word should be made flesh, and dwell among we. This is that which our Saviour tells his disciples, that Kings and Prophets and Righteons men defired to fee, and did not fee. The Saints that lived in that happy time to fee this fruit with the eyes of their flesh ; how sweet was it to their taste! when Simeon faw it, he cries out; Now Lord, let thou thy fervant Luke 2. 38. depart in peace. Anna gives thanks to the Lord, and speaks of Christ to all that looked for Redemption in Hierusalem concerning Christ. All the Saints that have lived in the world fince that time. have found this fruit freet unto their tafte, and have had their proportion in this joy. Some of them Indeed have forupled the obfervations of particular days for the incarnation of Christ : Because that Christ himselfand his Apostles never commanded it never did it, and they would not be wifer than their Mafter. 2. Because they would not countenance a fond and groundless opinion, that Christ was born the very 25 Dec. 3. Because thirdly they have observed, that through the corruption of times and manners, those times have been most grosly abused to superstition and profanenels. 4. Because fourthly, they think the Lords day, is a day of Gods inflitution to give thanks both for that and all other gracious acts of Redemption : But they are all agreed in this that the Incarnation of our Lord and Saviour is a fruit of the Appletree, exceeding pleafantto every true believers tafte. And there is reason this fruit frontd be freet: For by this is our fieth, polluted by Sin, again Sanctified, and put into a capacity of an Haign with God; by vertue

virtue of this our Saviour became in a capacity to merit for us, to fulfil the law for us actively and paffively. In thort, the whole thress of our Redemption lay upon this that the Son of God thould

take upon him our nature, and be incarnate for us.

2. His suffering being sempted, was a fruit of the Appletree's you have the story of it, Math. 4. 1. He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be sempted by the Devil. This fruit is likewise exceeding sweet to a believers taste: And there is infinite reason that it should be so. The believer hath heard that Christ was tempted by the Devil; he searcheth the Scripture, and Math. 4: he finds it true; he sits down and thinks with himself, 2 things.

1. Was be tempted who knew no Sin? Was the Devil so bold, with one in whom he could find nothing? Then surely, Temptations are no Arguments to prove a man a child of wrath. I may be buffeted by Satan too, and yet be a child of God by Adoption, seeing he was tempted who was the natural Son of God by an effential and eternal union. Oh! How sweet is this many times to

a tempted Souls tafte!

2. Again, the Spoufe confiders further; was Christ tempteds? for what was it? It was not for Sin in himself that God suffered it; for the Prince of this World found nothing in him. It was not for his tryal, for God knew what was in his Son, and needed not do it (as he doth by us) to make him know himself. It must be therefore for us, he must needs suffer as a publick Person; to take out the stings of those evils, and as the Apostle saith, Heb. 2. 17. That he might succour those that are tempted. Oh how sweet is this unto a believers taste! Nothing so boweth his Soul to the Earth as a violent guit of Temptation, many a poor Creature sinks under it: but when he can be perswaded, that nothing of this nature will conclude him no child of God; That Christ was therefore tempted that he might be able to Suecour the tempted: Oh how he cheareth at this news! how sweet is this fruit to his taste!

Thirdly, Christs Adive Obedience, is another piece of fruit growing upon this Appletree. This comprehends all those particular acts of Righteousness by which he perfectly sussilled the law of God in thought, word and deed. The believer hath heard this; that the Son of God was manifested in humane stells, and that in our stells, he sussilled the law of God in thought, word and deed, he was born without sig, there never was unclean thought in his heart, never finful word proceeded out of his mouth.

felf, that none of all this was necessary for himself, being Godman; or at least that supposing (what some urge) that adine Obedience was a debt due unto God from the humane nature of Christ, because that was a creature; yet this Obedience was the Obedience not of a Nature, but of a person that was God-man, and fo there was a meritorious Surplufage in his Obedience. The be-Hever confiders, that the Scripture faith , That be was made fin 2 Cop. 5, 21. for us that we might be made the righteoufnefs of God in bim; As he was made Sin for us, fo we are made the Righteonfnefs of God in bim; he was made fin for us by imputation; we committed the Sin, but God reckined it to bim and he was accounted the Singer: So we are made the Righteoufnels of God in bim; he did the acts which were Righteons but God imputes bis acts of Righteonfirefs to us. And now Oh!how fweet is this to a believers tafte!theres nothing fo troubles a believing Soul as the reflections he bath upon himselfs considering how often he breaks the Law of God in thoughts, words and actions, and he hath many fad thoughts how he shall stand before the Righteons Lord who loveth Righteonfuels. But when he confiders . That Jesus Chrift fulfiled the Law for him, and that he is compleat in Christ; That he hath done all : And that all our acts are bur of Obedience and Gratitude; nothing for fatisfaction: Oh! How freet is this to the believers tafte! Hence it is that God accepts at his hand, the willing mind conjoined with a just indeayour, although both be incumbred with many failings and impertionsails which ever I she Var he add elled fections in act.

Fourthly, His passive Obedience is another piece of the senit of this Appletree. His bloody death, and bitter passions when a poor Soul comes to be a wakened to consider that it is ordained to an Eternity either of happiness or misery: That the wages of every Sin is death. That it came into the world a debtor to the law and justice of God; and if it could have spent all its time in the world from the cradle to the tomb, without any Sin, this would not have excused it from divine wrath. for by one mans Disobedience (even Adams) it was of old made a Sinner, and it was conceived in Sin and brought forth in iniquity. When it surther considers, that if it should now begin to reform its life, and it were a thing possible for it, to spend all the remaining part of it's life, without one Sin, yet it must to Hell; for what satisfaction can it give God, for all the Sin that it hath already committed, in the time of its ignorance.

and Vanity? Oh! how these thoughts sink a poor Soul! hence It is that many a poor Soul upon the first convictions of thele things cries out that it is damned andone, &c. and it is a bufiness of much labour, fométimes to get the Soul from under these dark apprehensions: But now when once the Soul begins to hear this. That the Lord Jesus Christ was revealed from Heaven and took upon him our nature, and died upon the Crofs to pay his Father a full price by way of Satisfaction for his peoples Sin; that who foever believeth in bim, might not perish but bave everlasting Life. the Soul doth but tafte this by Knowledg and Meditation, it is a great revival, and very fweet to the talte of the Soul. But now when it comes by Faith to lay hold upon the death of Chrift; and God gives the Soulto lay hold upon his death: Oh! how fweet then is this fruit of the Crofs to his tafte! And after the believer is come to Christs how often hath he occasion to talte of this fruit to meditate of the Death of Christ, to apply his Satisfaction to itself, and

believers taste! I need not inlarge much upon this, take but that known text, who is be that condemneth? It is Christ that died.

toties quoties to often as the Soul doth this, how fweet is it to the

A Fifth piece of this fruit is his glorious Resurrection. The Apostle often puts them together. Rom. 4.25. He died for our Sins, and rose again for our Justification. Rom. 8.34. It is Christ that died, year ather that is risen again. The Resurrection of Christ, was one of his triumphal actions (when he led captivity captive.) And it is one of the fairest pieces of this fort of fruit, being a perfective act; which gave Life, Vertue and effect unto his Death: When the believer tastes of this, By Knowledg, Meditation, Faith; Oh how speet is it unto bis taste! The believer sits down and thinks of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ; and observes how many sweet conclusions it draws from it.

1. It eries out (as the Centurion a this death) Of a truth this must be Son of God. Now know I that he who died upon the Croft at Jernfalem, was more than a meer man, even the Son of God. For the Lord would not suffer his holy one to see corruption. It was impossible that he should be held of death. This was indeed the Son of God, the true Messian of the world. I see I have not misplaced my Faith upon a saile object.

2. Again (faith the Soul) is Christ rifen from the dead? Then I shall rife, though I fall by death, yet let not that last enemy rejovce over me; for Christ is the first-fruits of them that sleep:

Rom. 8. 34

1 Cor. 15. Rom. 8 , 11.

If

If Christ be risen from the dead, how saith my carnal heart that there is no Resurrection of the dead? for he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken my mortal body by his Spirit that dwelleth in me. How sweet was this (of old) to the taste of holy Job! Job. 19. v. 25. I know that my redeemer liveth—and though ofter my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I fee God; whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall be bold, and not another. Nay (saith the Soul) I am in part risen already, my head is risen, Christ in my flesh is risen, and the head will certainly draw the members after him.

Thirdly, (faith this Soul) is he rifen? then I shall also rife me to newness of life, For if I be rifen with Christ, I shall seek the things that are above; for, saith the Apostle, Rom 6.4. Therefore are we buried with Christ by bapeism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the father; even so we also should walk in newness of life; for v. 5, we shall be planted into the likeness of his

refurrection.

A Sixth piece of this fruit was his Afcension into Heaven; the believer reads of this Ads: 1. and in the Evangelists: And

thinking upon it, it is very fweet to its tafte.

1. Now know I (saith the Soals) that I shall ascend too. The Apostle makes use of Christs Ascension, as an argument to press Perseverance and Holiness, Heb. 4. 14. Seeing then that we have a great high-Priest that is passed into the Heavens; Issue that we have a great high-Priest that is passed into the Heavens; Issue that we have a great high-Priest that is passed into the Heavens; Issue San of God; let us bold fast our profession, and as an argument of hope and of consolation, he saith, our hope is entred into the vail, Heb. 6. 19, 20. whither the forerunner is for us entred, even Issue: Issue Christ (saith the believer) is the forerunner of my Soukhe is assended, he is entred; I shall ascend, I shall enter.

2. The Soul is further confirmed in this notion from Christs declared end of his Aseensian. John 14.2.3. I go to prepare a place for you, and if Igo and prepare a place for you. I will come again and take you to my felf, that where I am there you may be also, what can be imagined more sweet than this to a believers taste, whose eye

and heart is fixed upon eternity?

A Seventh piece of this fruit, is bis Discreeffion at the right hand of God; of this litting of Christ at the right hand of God; you read often in Scripture. God of old said to him; Pfel, 110. Sit then on my right hand. Stephen saw him there, Att. 7. 55 you read of it, Ith. 1. 13.3. ch. 8. v. 1. 1 Pet. 3. 22. Of his Intercession:

(which

(which is the second part of his Priestly Office,) you read Rom. 8. 34. Heb. 7. 25. 1 70. 2. 1. This fruit is exceeding sweet to the

believers tafte. For,

T.—We also sit together with him in heavenly places, Ephel. 2. 6. The believer, whiles he meditates of his Saviour sitting at the right hand of his Father, seeth himself also (in him) set there, and Oh! how sweet this must need be to the believing Soul!

2. While he tastes of the Intercession of Christ; he comforts himselt concerning his Sins, with that of Saint John: Though I Sin I have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the Righteons. Concerning his weak and imperfect duties, he comforts himself with that of Saint John. Rev. 8.3. that there is an Angel, at the Altar, who hath a Golden censer, to whom much Incense is given that he should offer it with the prayers of all Saints upon the Golden Altar, prevail which is before the Throne.

3. While he confiders that his Interceffour is at the right hand of God, [which is the hand of favour] he is confirmed that he shall

be with God, that God who heareth him always.

4. While he confiders him at the right hand, [which is the hand of ftrength and power,] he fees him able to vanquish and subdue all his enemies, the world, the slesh, the Devil, being able to subdue all things to himself. How sweet is this fruit unto his taite!

Laftly. There is a further fruit of this Appletree which is not yet fully ripe. It is Christs coming to judg both the quick and the dead, he is ordained of God for that purpole, Act. 10. 42. To this end Christ both died, and refe and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. Christ, by his death procured a Lordship over all. This Lordship shall be finally executed in his last act of Judgment ... - God will judg the world in righteonfneft, by that man whom be bath ordained, whereof he bath given an affarance to all men en that be bath raifed bim from the dead, AC. 17.31. to which purpose Jude faith he shall come with ten thousands of bis Saints. Saint Paul to the Theffilonians, 2 Thef. 1. 8. faith, he shall come with his mighty Angels. Now this fruit of the Appletree is sweet to the believers safte. Saint Paul having mentioned it, 1 Thef. 4. 15. 16. bids them b. 18. comfortitbemfelves with thefe wards : The Apostero Timothy faith, That the Law, (by which our Saviour) faith (7 obn 8;) the word shall be judged ; was not made for a righteous man, i. c. not to condemn him. Is it not sweet to a be-

liever

liever (think you) to know and meditate upon it and believe, that there is a day coming; when they that die in Christ shall rife first, and those that are alive shall not prevent nor be aforehand with those that are asleep. But they shall all be caught up into the Clouds to meet the Lord in the Air ; and fo they shall ever be with the Lord. Is it not sweet to their tafte, to meditate upon it? That there shall be a time, when they shall see him in whom they have believed, coming to judg the world, who shall be judged for all the hard speeches, which they have spoken against him; when God will clear up the innocency of his Servants, as the light, and their judgment as the noon-day; and the world shall understand the different reward of profanencis and debauchery, and an holy firica Life and Conversation; and the men of the world shall know that the people of God are no Reprobates, nor Hypocrites, and that there is a rem and for the Righteons, and there is a God that judgeth the Earth. But I shall add no more to this discourse of the first fort of the fruits of the Appletree.

Saint Johns tree in the Revelation, (the same with the Appletrie in the text,) bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded ber fruit every moneth. Thave (hitherto) only given you a talle of one sort of truit, and this is a fort, of which some were but yielded once, and will be yielded no more. In that he died, saith the Apostle, be died but once; He was incarnate but once; he was tempted but once; he performed attive Obedience to the law of God but once; he rose from the dead, and ascended into Heaven but once; he shall be incarnate no more, die no more, be tempted no more, rise from the dead no more, ascend no more. It is true he ever sitteth at Gods right hand, and shall ever live to make intercession for as, and he shall once come to judg the world in Righteousness. But there are other fruits of this Appletree which it yieldesh every moneth: Such are the Ordinances of God. The instances of the Spirit of Grace, &c. These also are sweet to the believers talke:

But of these hereafter.

to a 2 Ment Survivor Colly or the

Cant. 2. 3.

And his fruit was sweet unto my Tafte.

Have thewed you how sweet that fruit of Christ is to a believers tafte, which he once bare, viz. all his Acts by which he purchased our Redemption. I told you the last day that there was also other fruit which this Appletree (in my text) yieldeth every moneth; nay every day. His Ordinances, his Spiritual influences: It was prophefyed of old concerning the times of the Gospel, That from one new Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another; all flesh should come to worthip before the Lord, Ifa. 66. 23. The Apostle faith; That when Christ ascended up on high, he led Captivity Captive and gave gifts unto men; he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and fome Evangelists, and some Pastors and some Teachers; for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Chrift, Eph. 4. 11, 12. To thefe he committeth the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, I Car. 4, 1. Himself being to be ablent from us as to his bodily presence, he comforteth his people with their Spiritual Union, Jo. 15. And for the maintaining of Communion with him; he was pleafed to appoint certain divine Institutions for his Worship. There were Ordinances of worship under the old Testament (for God never lest it to humane prudence to determine the manner of his Worthip.) fuch were the Sacrifices, the Poffeover, Circumcifion, Prayer, Reading the law. Oc. these were freet to the believers taste; though the most of them were but prefigurative of a Christ to come, not Obsignative and confirming a Christ already come. The Caldee Paraphrast understands my text of some of these--- Es verba legis eins fuerunt dulcia gutturi meo; The words of his law were sweet to my taste. David faith, Pfal. 19. 10. That they were fweeter than the bony, or she hony comb. But most of these expiring being (as the Apostle calls them,) carnal Ordinances, and shadows of things to come; Christ was pleased to substitute others. There are that think, that Christ did but abolish the Carnal typical part of those ancient Ordinances fanctifying the other part : Our reading the word did but answer theirs of old. The King of Ifrael was to read in the book of the Lam, all the days of bis Life. Mofes was read in the Synagogues every.

every fabbath-day, Our preaching answered their expounding the Law, of which we read Luke 2, and the word of expertation, which was used in their Synagogues, of which we have mention more than once in the new Testament. Our Sacrament of the Lords Supper; was made up of their Aphicome, or bit of bread referved. (to the last) in their Passover, and their third cup of Wine used there also; consecrated by our Saviour, to be used as a lasting Ordinance of his Gospel; and there are that think that our Baptism. · had formething like it in the Jewish Padagogy in their washing of Profetytes. The Censures of the Gospel-Church mentioned Mat. 18. manifestly answered those of the Judaical Sanbedrim; whether fo or no I will not dispute: certain it is that they are now of another import, than they then were; and as they then were (though but prefigurative) Iweet to the believers tafte fo they are now : The Reading of the word, the preaching of the Gospel, the Sacraments of the Gofpel; yea the discipline of the Church, are all sweet onto the believers tafte! I shall enquire, I. How this appears to be true. 2. Whence it is, that they are so exceeding sweet.

That they are so there are 4. things which will evidently e-

vince.

1. The first is, Their great defire towards them, and towards the faithful Stewards of them; the Souls defire of any Object is a certain evidence of a real, or apprehended good in it; no man defires any thing but sub ratione boni as it apprehends it to be good. Now there is no truly believing Soul, but hath a thirst after the Ordinances of God. Ordinances were not so sweet under the law (when they were but prefigurative) as under the Gospel, now that they confirm a Christ come in the flesh; yet how passionately then did holy David defire the Ordinances of God? See Pfal. 84. 2. my Soul longetb, yez even, fainteth for the Courts of God; he prefers the condition of the Swallow and the Sparrow before his, because they could make their nefts near to Gods Altar, Pfal. 63. 3. My Soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirfty land where no water is. Pfal. 42. 1. As the heart panteth after the water-Brooks, &c. The Lord forefaw this defire in his people when by his Prophet Amos, threatning a famine, not a famine of Bread, nor a Thirst for Water, but a famin of hearing the word of the Lord, Amos 8. 11. he also addeth v. 12. And they foull wander from Sea to Sea, and from the North even to the Eift, to feek the word of the Lord. Nor did this defire die in the Saints of the old Teftament :

No sooner did the Gospel begin to be preached but it breaketh out. John Baptift preacheth the Gospel in the wilderness, and baptizeth, Math. 2. 5. Then went out to him Fernfalem, and all Indea. The Multitudes that followed Christ preaching everywhere confirmed the fame thing; for though it was true, that forme went for the loaves, forme out of curiobty; yet it is as true that others went out of an earnest and zealous desire of Gods Ordinances, whom Christ distinguished from others, opening more clearby to them the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, while he spake to others in Parables and in dark Sayings; and our Saviour doth tellthem. Math. 22.39. of a time, when though they at present grew wanton under Ordinances, they fould fay, Bleffed is be that cometh to you in the name of the Lord. Throughout the whole flory of the Acts of the Apostles, you have a proof of this in the peoples flocking together to hear the Apossles; yea through the whole flory of the Church, Christians frequenting the Ordinances of God, even then when they could not enjoy them at a less hazard than the peril of their lives, the confication of their Goods, etc. It was all but a demonstration of this earnest desire to Gods Ordinances which ever was and still is in every good Soul.

A Second Argument is, Their delight in Gods Ordinances. Indeed whatfoever is matter of defire when we want it, is the object of our delight when we enjoy it; unless upon the enjoyment of it we find that our apprehensions of its goodness were mistaken \$ which no Soul ever found concerning the Ordinances of God. How amiable are thy Tabernacles O Lord of bofts unto me! faith David. Pfal. 84. Pfal. 119, 103. How fiveet are thy words unto my tafte? yea sweeter than beny to my month. Whatsoever I said before to prove, Gods peoples defires to his Ordinances, from their earnest longing after opportunities of enjoying them, and running out after them, doth likewise in some measure prove this. David speaketh much to it, Pfal. 119. 97. Ob! bow Ilove thy law! it is my Meditation night and day. Pfal. 19. 8. The ftatutes of the Lord are right. rejeycing the heart. We need no more than the daily experience of pious Souls. Oh how fweet is Sermon to them! how fweet is a fervent prayer ! how fweet is a Sacrament, &c. how fweet is the reading of Gods word! how sweet is every Ordinance, and Insti-

tution of Chris!

A third thing which evidenceth Ordinances to be sweet unso the safte of believers, is, Their Impatience under the want of them. The strength

firength of this lies in this: That men are patient enough to be without, what they find no meetness in, nor have any advantage by, and it is univerfally true, that what men have no patience to be without, are to them very fweet to enjoy. Now you shall find this constantly verified in all the story of the Church of God. The people of God have been very impatient under the want of Ordinances; how fadly doth David complain in Pfal. 84. Pfal. 42. &c. how fadly doth the Church complain in the Lomentations! How bitterly doth the also complain, Pfal. 74. 7, 8, 9, that the Synagogues of God in the land were burnt up; we fee not our figne. there is no more any prophet. The Apostle Saint Peter hath this expreffion. 1 Pet. 2. 2. As new-born babes, defire the fincere misk of the word that you may grow thereby. There is nothing that the child. Is fo impatient for as for its breath; after that it cryeth, without that it will not be fatisfied. There is nothing of which a child of God is fo impatient, as to be denied the Ordinances of God; nothing makes him cry fo mightily to God, nothing makes him complain.

fo heavily to men.

There is yet a fourth thing which evidenceth the sweetness of them; it is. Their Zeal for the purity of them. There were no perfons fo odious to our Saviour Christ as the Pharifier who had debased Gods Ordinances, they had taught people, Math 19. 9. to worthip God in vain teaching the commandments of men. This is like: the adulterating of Coin in polities, and there is nothing fo odious: to a gracious Soul, because indeed there is nothing more odious. to God, nothing that so moveth him to jealousy. What Job saith 70b. 6. 25. may be applied here, Him foreible ore right mords? but what doth your arguing reprove? The pure Ordinances rightly administred, and strictly, according to the rule of his Word, they have a great force with an honeftheart; but it is not patient of the adulteration of them. And the zeal of a pious Soul for the purity of Ordinances, evidently speaketh its valuation and price of them, and the sweetness of them to the Souls tafte! what is so to us, we are not patient that it should any way be corrupted or debased. But I need add no more to prove what the experience of every Christian maketh good; That the Ordinances of God are sweet to the believers tafte. I shall in the next place shew you the reason of it; and this will evidently appear to you if you please to confider their nature under this double notion: 1. of Signe, 2, of facred Inftruments.

Reason 1.

1. I say they are Signs. The Psalmist (in the Churche's name) saith, wee see not our Signs. The Ordinances of God are signs, and that in divers Notions. Signs are of several sorts, some are Presignative, some are Indicative, some are Commemorative, some are Obsignative, some are Natural, some Instituted, &c.

When I say the Ordinances of God are Signs, I mean not natural Signs, thus the redness of the sky is a Sign of fair weather, Math. 16, 2. But Ordinances are instituted Signs: They are sacred Allions or Administrations which God hath appointed for Signs. Some Signs are formal which represent the thing which they signify,

fome are Material which declare it, but do not represent it.

signs. i. e. God appointed them to this end to prefigure some other Spiritual thing; such was Circumcisson, such was the Passever, &c. I dare not say that no Ordinances of the Gospel are in any thing prefigurative. I do know what some say: That our site ting together at the table of the Lord, is (by Christ himself,) made prefigurative of our sitting together in the Kingdom of God; and do think that there is too much in that Text, Lu. 22 30. (compared with some verses before,) for any stiffy to deny it. I think the Ordinance of the Sabbath is prefigurative of that Rest which God hath prepared for his People; and if there be any such prefiguration it must needs make these Ordinances sweet to a Gracious heart, as the meditation of Heaven and that Rest which God hath prepared for his people, must needs be sweet to every honest heart. But

2. Some Signs are Commemorative and Obsignative; and such for the most part are the Ordinances of the Gospel, punposeurind & openyisind The great Ordinances of the Gospel, viz. Presching and Administration of the Sacraments. They are memorials of the death of Christ: The latter are formal Signs. The Sacraments represent to us the death of Christ being instituted to that end; The first is a material Sign of it, for we preach Christ Crucified, I Cor. 1.23. And both of them are commemorative; and call to mind the death and pathion of our bleffed Lord and Saviour; yea and oblignative, or confirming of the Doctrine of the Gufpel; which way fo ever you look upon them, they must needs be sweet unto the believing Soul. The case is otherwise; for crucifixes and such bawbles, as men devise to call to remembrance these sacred things. Christ hath appointed his Ordinances for Signs, the other are but humane Inventions. Thirdly,

Christs fruit in Ordinances, sweet to a believers tafte.

Thirdly, some Signs are Indicative, declaring a thing to be; Phylicians in their Art call these Signa Justociad. And thus again the Ordinances of Christ are Signs, i.e. Tokens, of what? of Gods Favour to a people, and his dwelling in the midft amongst them; Shells, and names of Ordinances are not fo, but the pure administration of Ordinances is so: Christ is described under the notion of him who walketh, in the midit of the feven Golden Candlefticks. God is present with his people when his Ordinances are purely adminifired, and his worthip purely performed, fo many degrees of Corruption as are in any Church crept into the Ordinances, and worthip, so many steps is God departed from any people. Exekiel faw the Glory of the Lord in the temple at Fernjalem, Ezek. 8. 4. But if you read that Chapter you will find Corruption in Gods worthip was crept in and the next time Exekiel faw the Glory of the Lord, Exek, 9.2. The glory of the Lord from the Cherub, and gone to the threshold of the bouse. There are the names of Ordinances in the Popilh Synagogue, but there is nothing of the presence of God; humane Inventions and Corruptions have buried divine Institutions : Death it in their pot, and therefore we justly refuse their meat and their broth too. Now look as the prefence of God is infinitely sweet and pleasant to every gracious heart; for in reason must must those things be which are declarative open Signs of the continuance of Gods presence with them.

But secondly, The Ordinances of Christ, must needs be fiveet unto Reason 2. gracious bearts if they be confidered as Sacred Inftruments. Chrifts Ordinances are Signs; but they are not only Signs, they are inffruments alfo : The Prophet calls them Wells of Salvation It is true, they are not Gods, they can do nothing alone : I call them but Inframents, God can work without them, but he ordinarily worketh by and with them, Exod. 20. 24. In all places where Irecord my name, there will I come unto thee, and blefs thee. It is true under the Judaical predagozy; God appointed a certain place, Christ hath taught us that under the Gofpel we thould every-where worthip the Father, no place is more holy than another. But where-ever two or three are met together in bis name, be will be in the midit among ft them; but the promise is yet to his Ordinances, wherever they are truly, and purely administred, he will be in the midft amongst his people attending upon them. By them the Souls of Gods people are instructed, warned, convicted, reproved, strengthned, quickned, refolved, comforted; in thort, what-ever influences of Grace:

are finest unto the Souls of Gods people they ordinarily receive in and by his Ordinance, he has Inframents that convey it. Thy word bath quickned me, Pfal. 1990.50. Thy word is alight wone my fost, and a lamborn to my pathes, v. 109. Thus I have opened to you the second particular, and shewed how Christs second fort of fruit is sweet to the believers take.

The Theid which I mentioned was, his Spiritual influences. Thele allo are Chrifts fruit . They are the fruits of the frait; but the Spirit it felt was Chrifts fruit. He is called the Spirit of Chrift, not onely in respect of his Eternal procession both from the Father and the Son ; But as his influences, were part of Christs purchase, and Christ had a special hand in the sending of him. I will fend the comforter, faith he: Now these influences are various upon the Souls of his people. There are forme that are called common Gifts, they proceed from the Spirit, but do not diffinguish one who is the Child of God from one that is not lo: fuch now are the gifts of Preaching (or Prophelying) Math. 7. 24. Some shall say me have Prophelyed in thy name, to whom he will fay depart from me I know you not. So the gift of Prayer, it is a gift of Gods Spirit and a most excellent gift; but not difting withing. Those Math 7. faid, we have projed in thy name. An ability to express our minds to God in prayer: And to express Gods mind to his people in Preaching, they are admirable gifts, and very fweet to us; but they are not diffinguilbing. There are other diftinguishing gifts or influences of the Spirit of grace which are sweet unto the gration Soul; such are Effectivel calling, the pardon of Sins, the affirmace of Gods love, a newbeart, the strengthning, the quickning, comforting influences of divine love: All these with many more influences of divine Grace, are the fruit of Christ. They are given to us was Xgrev, on the behalf of Christ, they are conveyed, and applied to us by the Spirit of Christ, and they are all sweet unto a Christans taste. They must be so, they being means either leading to Eternity, or glimpfes of Eternity. We use to say, Finis dat amabilitatem medin; Heaven, the glorious enjoyment of God, are things that found fo fweet to every Christians can, and appear to defirable to every rational Soul, that whatfeever tendeth as a means in order to that end must needs be exceeding fweets much more what is an earnest of that blessed inheritance. I will not inlarge further upon fo plain and demonstrable a Subiect.

Lattly, Eternal life, the Beatifical vision of God, &c. is likewise fome

fome of Christs fruit; and this is pleasant to the believers tafte. John 17.2. he gives unto them eternal Life. God the Father giveth it, but he giveth it through Christ, Rom. 6.23. The gift of God is eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord: This is so plainly afferted every-where in the Gospel that it needeth no proof, much less doth it need a proof, that this is (weet to a believers talte! for who is there that would not fee life, and enjoy many days? Every Soul that believes such a thing as eternal happiness, and the possibility of a Souls attaining it; cannot but delight in the Meditation of it, especially when he hath any apprehention, that he shall attain to it: But this is enough to have spoken in the explication of this Proposition; the Application yet remains.

Cant. 2. 3.

And his fruit was weet unto my Tafte.

Have done with the Proposition which I turned these words into, and have nothing more to do but to make Application of it.

1. And in the first place ; Obferve here a note of definition, We t. betwixt the Spoule of Christ and another woman; between the true Children of God, and those that are strangers to, bim. The fruit of Christ is sweet to a believers tafte! Another man taftes them no more than the white of an Egg. To open this a little according to the three heads by which I opened the Propofition:

1. A believer can fit down, and think of the Incarnation of Christ, think of his being led into the Wilderness and tempted by the devil; of his fulfilling the Law, of his Death woon the Crofs, of his Refurrection from the dead, of his Afcenfon into Heaven, his Sitting at the right hand of God, his Interceffin which he there makes for his people; and while he thinks of them, his heart even leaps within him, and he rejoyceth in Spirit, more than the worldling doth in his corn and wine and Oil; and in the thoughts of all his worldly possessions and enjoyments. A natural man he can likewise sit down

and think of these things, what hindreth? The word is night bim even in his month; he can read what is there said of these things, and he can understand what he reads, and by vertue of that imaginative power which his Soul hath, he can as well meditate on these things as upon any other rational and intellectual objects. Ah! but he tastes no sweetness in them, he feels no joy, no refreshings in his Soul at the meditation of these things; what is the reason of this? 1. He hath no quick lively sense of his need of Christ. 2. He hath no faith in Christ. I say,

1. He bath no quick, lively, fense of bis need of Chrift. Our Saviour tells us; The whole need not the Physician, but the fick. It is as true; Those who judg themselves whole, see no need of the Physician, only the sick: The nature of all good lies in some suitableness in the thing which we so call to our nature or flate; now our nature requires, that that which we defire, (when we want it) or delight in it, while we have it, it should be good: So that it is impossible that the Soul of a man should judg any thing good, or sweet, in which he doth not see some suitableness to his nature, or to his state and condition. Now Christ's being a Redeemer, a Saviour, relates to persons that are in a lost miserable condition: And all that goodness and excellency which is in Christ considered as a Saviour, lieth in his Suitableness to the state and condition of undone loft Souls; and until the Soul comes to have a sense of this lost and undone state, he sees no sweetness, no excellency at all in Christ; no more than the whole man seeth in the Physician: Now the natural man, hath no sense at all of a loft undone state, or at least no quick and lively sense of it. It is true, men and women that live in the days and places wherein wee live, and hear it continually inculcated in our Sermons, that all men and women are by nature Children of wrath; that all are born in a fost estate, etc. they cannot but have a notional knowledg of these truths: but there is a great deal of difference, betwixt a brain-knowledg of this, and a feeling experimental knowledg of this. The Child of God hath not only a Superficial Brain-knowledge but he feels it with an aking heart, and being fensible of it as the greatest evil that he can possibly be subject to, whatsoever is a falve for this fore, and represented to him under the Notion of a Cure and remedy, must needs be exceeding sweet and pretious to his Soul. 2. The

2. The Natural man hath no Faith in Chrift. I have often noted to you a double Faith mentioned in Scripture : The first respecting the Proposition, and called by Divines faith of affent; the second respecting the person of the Mediator, and called faith of Reliance or Justifying Faith: Now both these Faiths contribute much, to make the fruit of Christ sweet to the Pelievers taste; and the want of these is the cause why another man hath no taste at all in them. Suppose any thing in it self to be good and fweet, yet if I do not believe the thing which (supposed to betrue) is so sweet, it is impossible my Soul should have any sweetness in it. It is true a natural man may have some faith in the Proposition of the Gospel: It is said by Saint James that the Devils believe and tremble. The Devils do believe that the eternal Son of God (Christ Jesus) did come down from Heaven, assume our natures, was tempted, fulfilled the Law, suffered upon the Cross, was buried, ascended to heaven, Oc. I must confess I am apt to believe that the Devils believe these things better than the most of men; having a more clear Knowledg they give a more full, clear, firm and fixed affent : But now the Child of God believes these things with a more full, clear, firm and fixed Assent; and this makes them more sweet. For take now any intellectual notion, as suppose this, That there is a bleffed eternity prepared for my Soul : The more full and firm and hxed my affent be to the truth of the Proposition, the more is that weetness, joy and delight which my Soul sucketh from it; and on the contrary, The more faint, weak and infirm my affent be to the Proposition, the more weak and faint that joy must needs be which my Soul hath from the notion. Now the affent which the unbeliever gives to the Propolition of the Gospel is very languid, faint, and infirm; and so his joy and delight must needs be, because it is impossible that the fountain should rise higher than the fpring which feeds it.

But this is not all, the Child of God hath a further faith, (which the holy Scripture calls the faith of Gods elect.) It is a power created in the Soul, by which it is inabled to reft and rely upon the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, as its Mediator and Saving our; which faith uniteth the Soul unto Christ, and appropriateth. Christ to the Soul; and giveth to the Soul a peculiar share, and interest in the Lord Jesus Christ; and hence the taste of Christs fruit becometh sweet to the Soul. You shall observe this in nature.

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That

That it is the knowledg of our particular Interest and Portion in a good, which doth most highly commend it to our Soul. There is very little sweetness to the worldling, to think that there is an infinite treasure of Gold in the Mountains of Peru; what's that to me saith he: but when he hath heaped up a little portion of Gold and Silver, in which he hath a propriety. This is very sweet; his propriety in the good makes it appear sweet unto him. Faith gives the Soul a propriety in Christ, and inableth the Soul to cry out My Lord! My Lord! and this makes the fruit of Christ sweet to his taste, and causeth him with delight to meditate upon all the redeeming acts of his Love, because by faith he believeth his particular propriety, interest and share in them. Hence it is that an unbeliever, though he knows what Christ hath done and suffered, and can read it, and when he hath read it, can sit and think upon it, yet can taste no sweetness in the Meditation.

But,

In the second place: A believer finds a great deal of sweetness in the Ordinances of God; this fruit is also sweet unto his tafte. To the Unbelievers not fo : The believer faith, when will the Sabbath come, the time when I shall go and appear before God? The language of the Umbeliever is when will the Sabbath be gone? that we may fet our wheat to Sale, making the Ephath small, and she flickel great. And herein is a remarkable difference now betwixt the Spoule of Christ and another person. The reason of this is evident from my former Discourse, where I shewed you whence it is that Ordinances are sweet to the Soul of a believer. Itold you they are fweet, As Signs, either prefigurative of Heaven, or Oblignatives confirming the truth of the Gospel: or 3. Indicative of Gods presence. 2. as Instruments, by which the Grace of God is conveyed unto the Soul. Now take a natural man, they cannot be fweet to him upon any of thele accounts: He hath no hopes of Heaven no earnest of Heaven in his heart; and therefore, those things which fignify Heaven, and the Rest of Gods people to him have no sweetness in them. He hath no taste in the Doctrine of the Gospel, and underfrands no more excellency in that than in another books and therefore what tendeth to the confirmation of that Doctrine is not sweet to him. As for the favour of God, he understands not the Value and Excellency of it he doth not know. that it is better than life, that the loves of God are better than Wine: hence the Ordinances of God to him have no fweetness at all. Confider the Ordinances of God, as they are Sacred Instruments by which the instances of Grace have been conveyed, or may be conveyed to the Soul; which is indeed the great thing, which commends the Ordinances of God to his Soul: Alas the carnal heart understands no such thing, as Absb said of Micsjab, He never spake good to me; so says the carnal heart, I never sound any good by Preaching, or Prayer, or Sacraments. Nor is there any desire kindled in his heart after the love and savour of God; hence it is that he tastes no sweetness at all in a Sermon, nor in a Spiritual servent Prayer, nor in a Sacrament, nor in any Ordinance of God.

A true believer finds a great deal of sweetness in the Meditations of Eternity. The Unbeliever findeth no fuch sweetness: A gracious heart can fit down and rejoyce in the thoughts of Eternal Life. and please himself to think of the time, when time shall be no more; and fo consequently, of death as that which brings him to this Eternity. On the other fide there is nothing so tortureth the heart of a carnal man, as the thoughts of Eternity doth. The reafon is because the one apprehendeth himself appointed to this bleffed Eternity, and by faith in Christ seeth his particular title to it, and interest in it. The other when he thinketh of Eternity. can fee no ground of hope, that he shall ever inherit Eternity; I mean a bleffed Eternity: and so it is no more sweetness to him to think of it, than it is to a poor beggar to think of the great riches. and honours that are in some Kings or Emperours Court ; which are no matters of pleasure to him, because he seeth no probability, that he shall ever be made happy in the possession of them. Thus you fee how this Notion, diffinguisheth the child of God from another man : But here ariseth a Case.

Case. May not the fruit of Christ be sweet to the taste of one that in not the Child of God? may not a natural man find some sweetness in the Meditation of Christs Incarnation, Death, Resurrection, &cc. And in the Ordinances of God, and in the thoughts of Evernity. &cc.

I answer there is no question, but he may, the hypocrite especially, Sol... hardly a profane man. I will shew you the reason; what I told you before is certainly true: That no one rejoyeeth much in the contemplation or meditation of any good; but he that apprehendesh, that he hath some right to that good, and propriety in it. Now the very apprehension of it whether it be true or false, causeth a proportionable joy and delight in the Soul. To give you an instance sup-

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posea Gentleman to have a great effate, and die leaving no Heir: Now, suppose a poor man of his Kinred, that indeed is not his Heir, but he supposeth that he is Heir : This false opinion now will be sufficient to make him joy, and rejoyce at the death of the Gentleman, though in very deed he be never like to be a farthing the better for it; yet he rejoy ceth as well as he that is the true Heir, and who hath the true and fole cause of rejoycing. So it is in this case, Christ hath died; and by his Death there comes to fome a great Estate, a right of Inheritance more worth than 20000 worlds. The believer is the only Soul, that hath a true right and title to the death of Christ; and so hath a true cause of joy. But now others that are but formal Hypocrites, may nourish up a pre-Sumption in their heart, which may produce a falle joy, and a falle bope; and fancy a fweetness in Christ, as their Saviour and Redeemer. This now to a profane man is hardly possible, because he leads his life in so leud and dissolute a manner, and so directly contrary to the rule of Gods Word, that he hath no reason but to conclude that if there be any persons that shall perish, he shall be one of them.

Nor can these things be equally sweet to the taste of an Hypocrite, or Unbeliever as they are to him that is a true child of God; because the latter doth not raise up himself a conclusion of hope which is like the Spiders Web; spun out of his own bowels, but as the Apostle speaks to the Romans, ch. 8. the Spirit of God witnesseth with his Spirit that he is the Child of God: He doth not only from the application of Scripture-principles rationally conclude that he is one of them for whom Christ died, &c. but he hath a surther, and more clear, and sure evidence given him in by the holy Spirit of God. Now this is an evidence, which no unbelieving Soul can have; who only raiseth up to himself, what he judgeth a rational Conclusion from mistaken premises, or principles.

Secondly, As to the Ordinances of God, they also may be sweet to the taste of an Hypocrite: God himself saith of the Hypocritical Jews, Is. 58. 2. That they delighted to know the Lords ways, and for sook not the Ordinances of God, &c. But the delight that they take in Gods Ordinances, is usually, 1. Partial; in some Duties or some Ordinances, not in others, or, 2. In the shell of Ordinances, when the Preacher is like one that bath the voice of a Lovely Song, and can speak finely and neatly; they cannot say with David, thy

word,

word is pure, therefore doth thy Servant love it; or 3. It is still in purfuance of the vain hopes that they have builded up to themselves of an interest in Christ and a title to eternity; as a means to which, they may wait upon Ordinances, and have some delight in them: But enough is spoken to this first branch of Application.

In the second place, is this the Character of the Spouse of Christ, Use 2. That Christs fruit is sweet unto her taste, his Alls of Redemption sweet, his Ordinances sweet, his Instruences sweet; the Meditation of that Eternity which he hath prepared for them that love him sweet: O let us then labour, that Christs fruit may be pleasant to our taste! Let us labour for this mark of the Spouse of Christ: Let us try our state by this Note; And let us labour to find this mark upon our Souls.

1. Try your felves by this Note. I hope there is none of you but take yourselves concerned to be interested in Christ, by faith united to him, &c. Know you not (faith the Apostle, 2 Cor. 13. 5.) that Christ is in you, except you be reprobates? There is no Soulexcept the Souls of reprobates, but Jesus Christ either is in or will be in. To be in Christ, and to be the Spouse of Christ by faith united to him are all one. I cannot therefore fee how any Soul, canwalk in peace, or fleep in peace, but he must have some comfortable hope, that he is in Christ, the Spouse of Christ, and by a true. faith united to him; and I so far presume of your Souls serious attendance to your eternal interest, that you do hope, that you have fuch an Interest to which hope I shall say, Amen. The Lord grant it. I wish that every Soul which hears me this day were indeed in Chrift. But (Brethren!) be not deceived; God cannot be mocked, and it will at last be little Satisfaction- to you that you have mocked your selves. The Apostle calls to the Corinthians to examine themselves, and prove themselves whether they be in Christ yea or no. Give me leave to press the same exhortation upon you, and by this note try your felves . Is the fruit of Chrift freet to your tafte! There are many other notes, that I might infift upon; but I shall not exceed my Text. Can you fit down and read, or meditate of the Incarnation, Temptations, Active and passive Obedience, Refurrection, Ascension, Intercession of Christ; and take a pleasure in these things, feel a secret sweetness overflowing and possessing of your Souls? Can you say that you find a pleasure and sweetness in the Ordinances of God? can you say (with David, Pfal. 122. v. 1.) I was glad when they faid unto me, letius go inte the boule of the

Lord! Our feet shall stand within thy gates Offernsalem! Can you see the fruit of Christ in your own Soul; quickening you when you were dead in trespasses and Sins; translating you out of the Kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of his dear Son, quickening you, strengthning you, &c. Can you sit and meditate of Eternity, and rejoyce in the hopes you have of the Glory of God?

But I hear some poor doubting Soul say here; If this be true the Lord be merciful to me, I cannot say that I find this in my own Soul, I cannot say that it is sweet to me, to meditate of the Alls of Redemption, my Soul is often saying, what is all this to me? Nor can I say that I find such a sweetness in the Ordinances of God: I do not find the word of God so sweetness in my oft-times it is very bitter to me, and

wounds my beart, &c.

I answer, It is not indeed the portion of every Soul to try itself by this note at all times, for indeed to this consolation it is necessary that the Soul should have some fight of its Interest and Union with Christ; without which (as I have often said) all that Christ hath done and suffered for Christians in the general, signifies nothing to this or that Soul in particular. But yet give me leave to add this, That the fruit of Christ is certainly sweet to every particular Soul, that hath any share in Christ; for thy relief. In the first place:

1. Let me ask you; was the fruit of Christ never sweet to thy taste? didst thou never think that thou hadst tasted how good the Lord was? didst thou never find a delight in drawing nigh unto God in God?and therefore because thou didst draw nigh to God didst take

a pleasure in holy duties?

Secondly, If then didft ever so find it, know that the hearts of Gods people are not always of the same temper; sometimes they walk in the light, and see no darkness; sometimes they again see no light; when the Soul is able to discern its Interest in Christ, and the work of God upon itself, then it is always sweet to it to Meditate of what Christ hath done and suffered, and to enjoy God in his Ordinances. But when the Soul cannot discern this, when it doubts all, it is no wonder then if the fruit of Christ be not so sweet to a believer's tastes because indeed at this time his mouth is out of tastes.

Thirdly, Give me leave to ask thee yet one question further, viz.

At this time when thou are not able to comfortably to reflect upon what Christ hard done and fusiered as to thy own particular con-

cernment ;

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veriment, and when thou does not find so much sweetness in the Ordinances of God, as thou desired; yet is it not sweet to thee to think what Christ bath done for others? And canst thou yet sorbear the Ordinances of God? and hast thou not yet an earnest desire to be made partaker of Christ and his benefits? The Souls thirst after the Ordinances of God even while it findeth no Comfort in them, doth signify, that the Ordinances of Christ are sweet unto its raste. And the Souls rejoycing, in the benefit of others by Christ, while it cannot apprehend any benefit that it hath by him at all, doth import that it hath some stopes (though smaller) that it hath a share and Interest in him.

Lastly, The Souls earnest desire to taste of the sweetness of Christ, and trouble and impatience because it cannot attain what it traily longeth and shirstesh after, is a good evidence that the Soul bath tasted of the frust of Christ, and that his fruit is sweet to the believers taste. But thus much is sufficient to have spoken to this case.

Secondly, Let what you have heard ingage you to an indeavour after this; That the feuit of Christ may be sweet to your taste. Give me leave, 1. To commend this study and indeavour to you, and press it upon you by some Arguments. 2. In a word or two to direct you init.

1. Let me first tell you that his fruit is the most ex ellent fruit; no fruit so sweet to the pallat of a reasonable Soul as this fruit is. He that will consider his Soul in its true notion and in its excellency, must consider it, 1. As rational, 2. As Immortal, determined by God to an eternity. Now I say supposing these two things concerning thy Soul, there's no fruit so suitable to it as the fruit of Christ.

1. Consider it but as a reasonable Soul, and the vileness of all the fruit which the world beareth will evidently appear. All that is in the world is the lust of the eye, the lust of the slich, and the pride of life. Now indeed these things gratify the outward senses, and the sensible appetite; but what do they signify to the rational appetite? to the Soul considered but as a reasonable Soul? Indeed consider the Soul thus: The fruit of learning and study, the fruit of Moral discipline, vertue &c. hath some suitableness in it.

But Secondly, Consider now the Soul as an immortal Soul, appointed by God to an eternity, and capable of a blessed eternity; nothing but the fruit of Christ is suitable to it: A learned man may go to Hell, and a vertuous man may go to Hell, only the Soul for L. whom

whom Christ was incarnate, died, role again, &c. that Soul I say cannot perish; fo that although the world affords fome fruit which is better than other; yet only the Appletree in my Text

bringeth forth fruit fuited to the Souls necessity.

2. Confider what a fad Symptome it is for a Soul not to tafte its moft proper and accommodate food : what would you think of a pallat. that could not tafte any sweetness in bread, or ought elfe, which is properly any mans food; but could tafte a fweetness in Hay and Oats, in Grass and Chaff? You would certainly say that pallat was exceedingly vitiated, and fignified a very diffempered body a what will you say to a reasonable immortal Soul bred to an eternity, but can taffe no fweetness in any thing that hath any tendency to it, to a Soul that can tafte a sweetness in lust but none in Grace, that can tafte a sweetness in the vanity of the creature, but nothing in Christ? certainly this Soul must be a perishing Soul.

3. Confider bom fweet foever the fruit of other trees be to you at prefent, no fruit but this will tafte sweet to you in your dying bour ; such an hour will come, yea it haftens, it furprizeth many, they report of an Emperour flying from an Enemy, that offered a Kingdom for a cup of mater. Brethren! when you come to die, had you a Kingdom to give, you would give it for an apple from this Appletree. It is true there was a Soul that in the last hour had the priviledg to pluck an apple from this tree (it was the thief on the cross:) One (faith that ancient) that none might delpair; but one that no man might presume. O Labour to be acquainted with that fruit while you live, which can alone be fweet to you when you come to die.

Will you fay? but what can we do? can we alter our pallats? is the way of man in himfelf? I answer, I know you cannot,

yet fomething is to be done by you in a way of means.

1. Get a Knowledg of this fruit of Christ; study Christ more, and the Gospel more, and the suitableness of Christ to the necessity of your Souls more.

2. Do not fatisfy your felf with a meer notional knowledg of the

mysteries of the Gospel, but think upon them.

3. Pray to God to give you your part in Christ; to shew you your need of him, and the excellency that is in him, and to change your heart for you, that you may be able to difcern and take spiritual things

4. Take heed of over-charging your Souls with other fruit.

The-

The tafte of one thing spoils the tafte of another Ordinarily, especially if the taftes be contrary: while thy Soul is filled with luits, and with designs for the world, and continuances for this life; thou wilt tafte little sweetness in Christ: Wash thy mouth clean from these things and thou wilt be the better prepared to taste the fruit of the Appletree, and find it sweet to thy taste.

25 Annul 11, anim. Least grants and which out to a demicated continue and continue

He brought me into his banquetting-bonfe, and his banner over me was

TT is the Spoule you fee which yet speaketh, we took our last leave of her under the Appletree, which the fate under with great delight, and bis fruit was [weet unto ber tafte : We find her in this Text removed into the banquetting-boufe. So faith the Text, he brought me into the banquetting-boule. The Heb. and Septuagint call it the bonfe of wine. Wine you know is a piece of a banquet. The house of wine is the house of joy, and rejoycing, Bernard reads. The King bath brought me; and takes notice of the different Appellation which the Spoule giveth to Christ in her converse with him from that which the gives him when the is speaking of him. But the note is loft, for I cannot find the term King, either in the Original or in any ancient Version. We had it indeed chap. 1. 4. in a phrase much like this of the Text ; The King bath brought me into his Chambers : but in this Text we have it not. The house of wine faith Mr. Ainsworth, is either the wine-cellars, so called because wines are there lodged, I Chron, 27. 27. or the banquettingboufe (as we translate it) because we use wine at banquets: Every one will understand it a figurative and metaphorical expression drawn from the Custome of men, who as an expression of their great love to their friends, either carry them to a winecellar, or entertain them at a banquet. Efther made a banquet of wine. What Christs wine is will easily be understood by understanding the nature of wine; which by reason of the sweetness is very grateful to the tafte, and by reason of its best and frength, refresheth and cheareth the heart, Pfal. 104. 15. wine which cheareth the heart of man : And the Wife-man upon this account, willeth it to be given to bim

that is beary of beart, that he may forget bis forrow and bis affliction. Bernard applieth this to the effution of the gifts of the boly Spirit upon the Apostles, and disciples in the days of Pentecost, when fome thought that they had been filled with new wine. Indeed the graces of the holy Spirit are by the Apostle compared to wine, Epb. 5. 19. Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess; but be ye filled with the Spirit, &c. Mercer understands by the house of wine, Mysteria Scripturarum; the Mysteries of the holy Scripture, which is conformable to the Caldee Paraphrafts Domus Doctrine, the house of doctrine (referring it to the glving of the Law.) Others underfland it of the increase of grace, and the consolations of Gods Spirit. The Scripture is the wine-cellar : The influences of the Spirit they are as the wine in this cellar. Some understand it of the Ordinanees of the Golpel. The Gospel-dispensation is indeed an house of wine, the Ministrations and Ordinances of the Gospel are as the cups by, and out of which this wine is measured out to the Souls of God's people, I shall carry it in that fense which I believe to be most proper and to which the others ferve, ziz. concerning the consolutions of Gods Spirit, which the Soul receiveth by the Serip. tures; and in the Ordinances. This is the house of wine, it followeth in the Text, חבלו עלי אחבה which we translate, His banner over me was Love. The 70. Tigare, ordain or order love upon me; the Walg. Lat. he hath ordered love upon me; the Syn, and Arabick, read it with the Vulg. Lat. dispose or order love toward me. The Heb. word is 1717 however it be pointed, it must either come from the Heb, word 717; which fignifieth to fet up a Stand+ ard, Pfal, 20.6. In the name of our God we will fet up our banners. or from the Noun 717 which fignifieth a Standard, or an Enfign fuch as is used in battel, and is used Numb. 2.3: The Standard of the Camp of Indab, &c. and the fenfe must be either (as we read it) His Enfign, Banner or Standard toward me was love; or thus, which is in sense the same; He lifted up his Colours, his Ensign, his Standard over me, and there was in it Love. Avenarius noteth that the word 717 may fignify diligo, I Love, because of the great Love which Souldiers have to their colours. The sense may be according to an Active or Passive Notion: either Love was that which was prote upon bis Colours; or it was Love which drew ber Soul to ferve under bis Colours. You have now the Text opened, I come to the Propositions which I shall raise out of them, Indeed I shall need raife none, the Text naturally falls into two Propositions. 1. That

77.

T. That the Lord Jefus Christ bath a banquering house; into mbich I Prop. He sometimes bringeth bis Church and the individual Souls of those that truly believe in him. Secondly,

2. Christ buth a banner for his Saints, and bis Banner in love. 2 Prop.

I will open the first in some explicatory Conclusions.

1. Jefin Christ bath from the beginning of the world entertained bis 1 Concl. Church with various dispensations of providence, and doth to yet entertain every true believing Soul. There is an Eternal Love with which God hath loved his people. A Love in God the Father which moved him to fend his Son into the world, to take upon him our nature, Job. 3. 16. Christs elective Love was everlasting, and this was equalsaccording to this he loved alike his Saints in all Ages, and all his Saints in each particular. Age: but this everlafting Love is manifested in providential dispensations; which according to the wisdom of God have varied in all Ages, and do vary towards particular Saints in every Age. The dispensations of Christ to his Church under the Gospel speak a greater love than the legal difpensation of the same Covenant of Grace. The Apostle mentioneth it as a greater Salvation, a better Covenant, baving better promifes: God (faith he) who at fundry times; and in divers manners fpake in times p of unto the Fathers by the Prophets, bath in thefe last days spoken unto us by bis Son. Nor were the more secret dispensations of Grace, the same to the Souls of all Saints in any Age: no not the same to the same Souls; but fill varying according. to the good pleasure of God, and according to his own infinite wildom, which best knows how to disect and apply means in Order to his eternal purpose. This is so plain from the whole current of the Gospel, and the particular experience of the Saints of God in all Ages, that I shall not need heap up Scriptures in the proof of it.

Secondly, Though all these dispensations, he proper means in rela-2 Conclition to the great end of the Souls Salvation, and profitable to the Church
and the Soul in reference to that end; yet some are more sweet and
pleasant than other; and somore firly compared to Christs banquet:

I say they are all proper means to our Salvation, and profitable to
the Souls of Gods people to that end. We cannot deny this without either denying that they are Dispensations of God, or reproaching his infinite Wisdom; as not best understanding what is most
suitable to the great ends of his own Glory and his peoples Salvation. It was profitable to Gods ends, and to the manifestations of

hiss

his Glory in the Salvation of his people. That Christ should be held out to the Jews, only in dark Prophety; Significant Rites and Ceremonies; Types and Sacrifices. It may be we cannot understand how it more tended to the advantage of these great ends, that Christ should not be incarnate till almost 4000 years of the World were past's than that he should have been Incarnate, and have died affoon as Adam was fallen: But it is most certain, or the Wisedom of God would have otherwise disposed it. So many a poor Soul cannot understand how it more conduceth to the Glory of God, and his own Salvation, that he should be exercised under varieties of Afflictions, and with the Spirit of bondage and dark dispensations; but most certainly it is so. But yet I say some dispensations, are more sweet than others. Concerning Gods dispensation to the Church, I suppose none doubteth, but that Gods dispensations, under the Gospel are far more sweet than under the Law, they faw but in a glass darkly, we face to face. And as to particular Souls it is as much beyond disputer The sensible confolations of the Spirit of Grace are of all others doubtless the most fweet and pleafant; fometimes God caufeth his people to walk in the dark and to fee no light; fometimes he caufeth them to walk in the light of bir Countenance all the day-long. This Variety is evident in the case of David, and Paul, and Job, and other Servants of God in Scriptures and it is evident in the daily experience of those that defire to walk close with God.

3 Concl.

3. The difpenfation of the Goffel to the Church in the General; and the Inlightning, Quickening, Strengthening, Confolatory, bifluences of the Spirit of Grace to particular Souls, may be fitly compared to a Banquetting-boule, onto an boule of Wine. We are come now to specify the house of Wine into which Christ hath led his Church, and into which he leadeth the Souls of his Saints : As to the Churchin General, I fay it is the Gofpel-difpenfation. By the Go pel-dispensation; I understand, both Gods Revelations of himfelf to his Church under the Gospel, and also, the whole way of Gods peoples having communion with him in the way of his Ordinances. For the first which was Gods Revelation of bimself to bis people; in two things it excelled Gods former Revelation of himself. 1. As to the matter revealed. The matter of old revealed could be no more than that A Virgin should conceive, that the Mellias should come, and make his Soul an offering for Sin : But we preach a Chill already come, Crucified Dead, buried, rifen again,

and aftended, this is much more fweet; by how much any good is more Iweet in the poffession than in the hopes of it. And 2 Ar to the manner of the Revelation: The way of old was in a glass darkly, the believer might fee a Christ hid under the paschal Lamb, the Goat flain, &c. But we preach plainly the great mysteries of Salvation. And as Gods Revelation is much more Tweet; so the whole way of our Communion with God under the Golpel is far more sweet than under the Law. Their Communion with God was far more coftly, burdenfome carnal, &c. The Apostle faith, they had carnal Ordinances, our way of Communion with God is more Blain, Simple, Free, Sweet, than the Jews ever was. Christ hath brought us into his boufe of wine; and he hath kept his best wine unto the last. Look as that which differenceth a Banquet from an ordinary Meal, is the delicacy and freetness of what is provided there to entertain the pallats of the Guelts : So in the Golpel, there: are those Influences and Revelations of God, which are more delightful and fweet to the Souls of Gods people than any were to the Jews. And as I fay for the difpensation of the Gospel to the Church in general, for fay for the particular dispensations of the Spirit of God. There are many Influences of the Spirit of Grace upon the Souls of Saints: four are sweet above others; Inlightening, uickening, Strengthening, Comforting Influences.

r. The Enlightening Influences of the Spirit: Those influences by which the Soul is inabled to understand and comprehends the Scriptures and the great Mysteries of mans Salvation which are contained in them. As light is a pleasant thing to the eye, so is knowledg to the understanding, and the Knowledg of God and Christ more incomparably sweet to the Soul, than any thing in

the world can be befides.

2. The Strengthening Influences of the Spirit ore so also. How doth the Soul rejoyce when it findeth itself enabled and strengthened to resist its lusts, to overcome a Temptation, to perform a du-

ty, oc.

3. The Quickening Influences of Grace; these are also sweet. How doth the Soul even leap for joy, when it finds within itself a readiness of heart for the service of God, and a largeness of heart in the service of God, that it can pray and hear with a Spiritual Life, Preedom and Chearswiness.

4. Finally, the Scaling, Comforsing, Influences of the Spirit of Grace, are also exceeding sweet to the Soul. What is that but any

Heaven

Christs Banquetting bouse into which he leads bis spouse.

Heaven upon earth, when the Soul findeth the Spirit of God witneffing with its Spirit, that it is the Child of God? Fourthly,

4 Concl.

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4. As Chrift did of old entertain fome of his peoples Souls under the darker dispensations of the Covenant of Grace, with these refreshing dispensations (which were like a banquet of wine to them;) for under the latter and more full dispensations of the Gospel, be doth ftall entertain fame of his peoples Sants with thefe gladding dispensations. Take the dispensation of the Covenant of Grace under the Law in the whole it was indeed profitable, and fuch as ferved the Saints of that Age to carry them to Heaven; but it was not so pleasant and sweet, as the Gosp 1-dispensation is: but yet even then God was not wanting to the Souls of his Saints in the more special Illuminations, Quickenings, Strengthenings and Comforts of his Spirit. It were easy to thew you this in the instance of Abraham, who fam Christs day and rejoyced; of Jacob, who faw that the Scepter should not depart from Shilob, &c. of David whose pious Soul you often. find triumphing in the returns, and Influences of Divine Lovesof Tob, who knew that bis redeemer lived, and that the he should fee bim with thate ever: Though indeed the manifestations of the holy Spirit of this nature be suppesed more ordinary, and full and clear under the Gospel, after the more full effusion of the Spirit of Grace: Under which it is most certain, that God hath entertained and doth entertain the Souls of many of his Saints, in this boufe of wine , not only giving them Influences of Grace sufficient to carry, them to Heaven, but making their cups to overflow : yet I fay. this is not the portion of all his Saints, nor of any of them at all times. God fo Graciously provideth for his people that they never want the necessaries of Salvation; but for those things which are but Superfluities, and accommodations in their Spiritual Pilgrimages. the Lord gives and with-holds them, according to that wisdom with which he tempers his Love toward the dearest of his Saints. But I haften:

5 Concl.

5. It is Christ and Christ alone that can bring the Soul into the bonse of wine. The Soul cannot do it, if it be cast down, it cannot raise itself up; if it be dead it cannot quicken itself; if it be weak it cannot give itself strength. I can do all things (saith Saint Paul) through Christ that strengtheneth me. How often doth David pray, that the Lord would quicken him in that excellent Psal, 119. And for the consolatory instances of the Spirit. As the Spirit is called the Spirit of Christ, so the consolations are called

the confolations of the Spirit . (who is called the Comforter) : It is Christ that comforeth us in all tribulations, 2 Con. 1. 4. This will eafily appear if we confider. That to the application of the Scriprure and the Promifes of it to our own fouls, there is necessary not only a general concurrence of Providence, inabling the faculties of our fouls to their reasonable operations; but also a special influence of grace helping us to fee our interest in Christ, and to make a particular application of what the Word of God speaketh indefinitely to our particular case: Besides that experience tells us, that nothing less than a divine hand, can either remove the burthen of fin, or the incumbrances of temptations from which the foul is made heavy, or fad; or take away that heart of stone that is in us. that deadness and heaviness of spirit which weakens, or clogs our fouls, and is the cause of that deadness, and heaviness and dulness that doth oppress them. I have now done with the Doctrinal part. I come in a few words to the Application.

In the first place; Hath Christ a Banquetting boufe? an boufe of Ufe I. Wine! where he entertaineth his Church? and is this the Gospeldispensation? Give me leave then: 1. To bid you welcome all this day to the bonfe of Wine, and to call upon you to give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jefus, who hath erected this Banquetting-house for the souls of his Saints in these latter days, and to the Lord Fefus Christ who hath filled it with his new Wine: May not I fay to you all as Christ faid to his Disciples, To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of beaven; Bleffed are now your eyes for they fee, and your ears for they bear. Kings and Prophets and righteous men have defired to fee those things which you fee, and have not feen them, and to bear the things which you hear, and have not beard them. Oh, let all our fouls blefs the Lord! let all that is mith-

in w praife bis boly name!

The Jews of old were the only people which God had upon the face of the Earth, yet the Lord gave them but mater to drink; they Taw but in a glass darkly, you hear of a Christ plainly; the Gospel is preached amongst you clearly and powerfully, he that runs may

read and understand.

And fecondly, thew your thankfulness in drinking of this Wine which Christ hath prepared, imbracing the Doctrine of the Gospel, which is promulged, preached, and published amongst you: why fit you looking one upon another when your meat is before you? Oh confider how grievously the King took it, when he made his Matth as

Wed-

Wedding-Supper, and shoft that mere bidden mould not come ! for many years, Oh Christians ! the Banquet of Wine hath been beforeyou : we are but fervants to the Mafter of the Feaft, to tell you all things are ready, to call upon you to cat and drink, yes to drink abundantly as the beloved of the Lord': Here have we flood pleading with you, entreating of you, that ye would be reconciled unto God; I am afraid there are many of you that have not yet fo much as tafted bom good the Londin. I remember it is faid of our Saviour, John 7. 37: In the loft day, that great day, of the Feaft, Fe-Su flood and cryed, Saying, If any man thirft let him come unto me and drink. The great day of the Feast yet holds, (Bleffed be God!) God grant it be not one of the last days. We are yet as Christs Embaffadors crying to you, If any, man thirft, let bim drink : How foon our Mafter will call us away and fend in a voider I cannot tell. It is certainly advisable to every foul (for fear of the worst) to eat and drink of this Banquet while he may. The days will come when you will fay, Bleffed is be that cometh to me in . the name of the Lord! I shall add but one word more, which

fhall be.

To fuch as are not brought yet into the house of Wine, as to the fpecial and particular difpensations of God towards them. It is (I know, the case of many an honest heart,) they are indeed in the house of Wine living under the Gospel dispensation. But for the effects of Wine, exhiberating the Spirit, chearing the heart, refreshing their fouls, they find little or nothing of thefe. They compain of a fpiritual darkness, they are not able to comprehend the Mysteries of Salvation: of a spiritual deadness, they are indeed not dead in fins, but they are dead to Duties, they find little or no life in their. fervice of God; they find a spiritual weakness and inability to their spiritual work, and for the consolatorie influences of the spirit of Grace. They have indeed heard of such things; and have met with others whose Souls have been full of this new-Wine; till even even the bottles have been ready to burff again as not able to bear it; but their Souls are ftrangers to it. What now fhall be faid to these Souls? shall they be exhorted to come into this Banquettinghouse, or being there, to cat and drink their portion? alas, this is that they would have rather than their life. They lie at the Pool of Bethefda, the Angel comes down at certain times, and the pool is firred, and fome or other gets in but they cannot get in ; What now thall these Souls do to attain this Happines? to en-

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dear themselves so far to Christ that he may being them also into

the Banquetting-houfe?

Instruct. In the first place, keep still in the Wine-cellar, I mean, under the Ordinances of God; Be much conversing with the holy Scriptures: Be much under quickning powerful preaching of the Gospel; be much in Prayer; Christ is always there, he drinks a cup of Consolation fornetimes to one, sometimes to another, it may be not yet to thee, but thy course will come: Christ will drink to all his guests in due time; wait still, read still and pray still, and hear still, and wait upon God in Sacraments still, Plata 27.14. Wait on the Lord, he of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy hears,

wait I fay on the Lord.

In the second place; Let thy great care be to keep thy eye upon Chrift, and to walk closely with him : The Master of the Banquet that feeth the guefts eye much upon him, will at last cast an eye towards him. The Christians Eye is the Eye of Faith: an alluring Eve that draweth the heart of Christ and even commands his love to the foul of his Servant, and walk close with Christ, John 14.2 15 He that bath my Commandments, and keepeth them, be it is that leveth me, and he that loved me shall be loved of my father, and I will love bim and manifest my felf to bim. The Wife-man faith. That the way of the Lord is frength to the utright. It is true as well of that way which is the Souls duty towards God, as of the way of God in an active fenle, as it fignifies the course of Gods providence towards men : there two things are put together by the Pfalmift, wait upon the Lord and keep bis may. There's nothing fo hinders the Souls comforts, nothing to abates the Souls ftrength: nothing that makes the foul fo dull and heavy towards God as wilful finning doth; Take heed of it.

3. Lay not too great a stress upon consolatory impressions; nor build thou all they consolations upon the witnessings of Gode Spirit. God may sometimes (for Christians impatience) keep them from consolatory influences, to let them know they may go to Heaven without them, and that they are not of the necessaries of Salvation; slight them not, they are the privy-Seals of Heaven, the highest tokens of divine Love, but do not idolize them. Zauchy, I remember, hath another notion of the scalings of the Spirit from what we ordinarily take them for: A Seal, saith he, maketh an impression upon the Wax as well as consistent writing; and a Soul is said to be scaled by the Spirit, when the holy Spirit of God hath made

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upon

upon it an impression of purity and boliness. If thou earst but find this, that the holy Spirit in Regeneration hath made an impression upon thy bears, and lest its Image upon thy Soul, that thou art by it made pure, and holy, spiritual, and heavenly-minded, thou art in one sense sealed: and thou oughtest to take comfort in this, though thou hast not a demonstration a priori, and art not able to rejoyce without some doubting, and to triumph in the Lord, upon the full assurance of divine Love. But this is enough to have spoken to this first Proposition of my Text.

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And bis Banner over me was Love.

Have observed to you the last day the variety of Reading of my Text, the Septuagint, the vulgar Latin, the Syriack and Arabick Versions, reading it in a quite different sense from the Hibrew: raseas ordinate, disposite, disposite in me charitatem, ordain, or order, or he hath ordered Love upon, or to, or towards me.

But I told you the last day, that I took my felf little concerned, to attempt their reconciling to the Hebrew text, because I saw no foundation for their varying; for whether the word be read with such points as our ordinary Hebrew Bibles offer to it, or with others, the sense must be either, His Banner over me was love, or He listed up a Banner over me, viz. Love, which is in sense the same. The proposition of the Text there is plain before you.

Prop. Jest Christ's Bunner over a believing soul is Love. Two things I have to do: 1. To shew you what is there meant by Christ's Banner; 2. To shew you bow and in what sense, Christ's Banner over his Church; or over believing souls in particular is love, and to prove it to you: Aster this I shall make application of it.

As to the first, By understanding the Notion of a Banner in the general; we shall casely understand what Christs Banner is. The Hebrew Lexicographers agree, that the Hebrew word 777, fignifies the same with the Latine word Vexillum, which in English is a Banner, or Ensign, or military Colours. Criticks in the Latine tongue

what a Banner is. trongue say, that Vexillum is quasi velillum parvum velum, a little Curtain, Sail. Scaliger derives it a Vebendo, because it is carried in an Army; since righting was in the World, the light of Nature teaching men, in order to the better management of Armies, to cast them into Regiments and Companies, taught them also to make Banners and Ensigns, something or other, as for other uses so to distinguish this Company from that. Historians tell us, that the Romans at first had bottles of Hay for their Ensigns: After this the Romans had colours of Purple, as the Persians of Flumescolour, &c. and so several Nations according to their several fancies. You read of the Standards of the Children of Israel by which they were by Gods order to abide, Numb. 2. 2. 3. But that which we are chiefly to consider is the use of Banners; and that was source fold.

First, for Distinction: The Colours distinguish Enemies from Resiends, and one Company from another: the Souldiers of the several Tribes of Israel were distinguished by their Banners or Ensigns.

Secondly, for Direction: The lifting up and displaying of the Standard, as also the moving of its directeth the Souldier, 1. white Esty 13. 222 there to reford, as to his proper place: 22. when to move; when his Colours move, he moveth: 3. They are useful for Signification, and they properly fignific three things; 1. The Union of Companies:

By the Standard is fignified, that all that refort to it are united in such a Company, such an Army, Regiment, or Band, &c.

21. They fignifie Protestion, being in the heart of a Covering, &c.

Thirdly, They fignifie Victory's In token of Victory, when Souldiers have got a Townshey hang out their Colours upon the walls, fo also in hips won from Enemies; Plalm 20,5. We will rejuyee in thy falvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners.

Fourthly, There is yet a fourth use of them, and that is for Terrer to the Enemies: hence the Church in that Book is compared to an Army terrible with Banners, Cant. 6.4, 10. It is a terrible thing to see an Army marching together with all their Colours displayed. Thus I have shortly she wed you the Civil and Military use of Banners. Christ here in my Text is set out, as one that hath his Banner; and the Text tells you, that his Love is his Banner, by which several things are properly understood according to the notion of a Banner already opened, of each of which a word or two in order. The particulars are seven.

I. The :

1. The Love of Christ is that which diftinguisheth the foul of a Bethe lieves from another faul, and the Church of God frem othe compenies. As the Benner diffinguisheth one Army from another, and one Company in the fame Army from another : 'fo it is the Love of Christ, which diffinguisheth the Church of God from Heathers. and maketh Christians in the fame Church to excel one another. I hinted to you the last day, that the Love of Christ may be taken in an Adive or paffine fenfe , Subjedively , for that love wherewith Christ loveth us; or objectively, for that love wherewith the Soul loves him: the first is most likely to be the fense, bur take it which way you will the Propolition is true. Wherein is the difference betwixt a Believer and an Unbeliever, a child of God and a child of the Devil , fave only in these two things ? 12. In his Relative flate: as the one is in a flate of reconciliation to God in a justified flate; the other is in a flate of weath and condemnation. Or ... 2. In his qualities; or in the frame and temperature of bis fbirit, be is a man of another foirit, of another beart. Now, what 'is it that makes either of thefe differences, fave only the love of Christ ? by that we are justified freely through his grace (faith the Apostle,) his love in dying for us was the meritorious cause; his love in applying his death to our fauls by bis Spirit, is the proximate efficient Canfe : What is it that makes one foul a justified foul, another to remain yet unjuflified, but Christs free love looking upon one, and not upon another? For the other difference, which lies in the holy frame and temperature of the heart, by which again the believing Soul is difinguifhed from another; what is it that makes this difference but the love of Chrift, taken either Subjectively, or objectively? Take the Love of Christ as Christ is the Subject; it is he that takes away the bears of stone, and gives the bears of steff; that takes away the old beart, and gives a new beart; and it is his special distinguishing love to their fouls which causeth him to do it. Take the leve of Christ, as Christis the object of it, it is the fouls love to Christ, that distinguisheth it from another Soul, and no other vertien disposition or quality will do it. If I have not love, it is nothing, faith Saint Paul. And it is the lave of Christ that distinguisheth the Army of the Church Catholick, from the rout of Pagans and Infidels. The Apostle mindeth the Ephefrane of this, Eph, 2. That there was a time when they were in the fame condition with others. Aliens to the Common-wealth of Ifrael, &cc. and only the love of Christ calling them out of that flate made the difference. If any thing elfedid, if they being called, dif-

fered

9 Concl.

sered in boliness of bears, and conversation from shows. Still it was the love of Christ that made the difference, for it was Christ that our of love in the heart. Doth any Church differ from a fountain of love in the heart. Doth any Church differ from another in the pure administration of Ordinaness, or in the purity of its Members 2. All this still is from Love. It is the love of Christ to them, that disposeth them to this purity, and it is their love of Christ that is the Fountain of this actual difference, the love of Christ in their hearts constrained them. Thus Christs Banner of Diffinction towards his people is Love. Give me leave to apply this Proposition (as I shall do the rest) distinctly, for the same

Application will not fuit them all..

In the first place, Let this be rooted in your bearts, that you may Use not glory in any other differences, and diffinitions. There are many) things which make men to differ one from another, and to excel one another. The Worldmakes differences in Persons by season of fex birth, breeding mental dispositions, accomplishments of Learning and Morality, Honours, Riches, the And allthese do diffinguish towards the world, but not towards Chrift. In Christ there is no difference betwirt male and female, Jew or Barbarian; noble or bafe, Free or Bond, Rich or Poor, Gentleman or Beggar: that which makes all the diftinction is believed of Christ or not beloved; holy, or not holy; one that loves Christion one that loves him not. Oh let not men glory in their Banners or Enfignes of their Pather Houses, that they are mobly born or Gentlemen born! Let not men glory in the differences that natural temperature and dispositions make, nor which ingenuous breeding makes. Mistake me not, God by his Providence makes differences amongst men : it is by his Providence that one man is nobly born; another meanly born; one man comes to Honours, another to Riches, others are kept in mean and low conditions; and where God makes fuch difference, men ought to give a civil respect and reverence proportionably. But I fay, these differences are not to be gloried in by them that have them, though they are to be observed by their Neighbours. Alas, these are none of Christs diftinguishing Banners; he that hath the highest advantages from these may in the day of Judgment stand at Christi less band, and be from thence sent to Hell. Oh, let not the Nobleman them stands with Nability, nor the Gentleman in his Gentry, nor the learness and in his learning, nor the learness learning in his beneares, nor the vieb man in his viebes !!

chribians exhorted to be diffinguished from others,

but let him that glorieth glory in this, that Christ lover bine; and that be loveth the Lord Fefus Christ. This is the only confiderable difference, and will be found for at the great Day.

Ufe 2.

Secondly, Is Christs Banner bit Love? Is this his mark of diflinction? Let bim then have of all the praife, and let it be our bufinefs, to tabour to be thus diftinguished from others : Who buth made thee to differ ? faith the Apolle, what thou haft, thou haft received it; let us give thanks to him from whom we have received, and let it be our bufiness to labour to be under this Banner! to be such as the love of Christ to us, or our love to Christ may distinguish from the rest of the world. But I have spoke enough to the first Comclusion, opening the Proposition. I come to a second.

2 Concl. Direction.

The exalting of Christs Love directesh and invitesh every foul whither to go. This you know is one great use of the Banner on Con lours amongst Souldiers, when they fee once their Edlours lifted: up and displayed, every Souldier that belongs to that Company is by it both invited and directed to go unto them. Our Saviour faith, John 3.14.15. That as the Branen-ferpent was lifted up fo should the Son of man be lifted up, Tob. 12.32. Our Saviour faithagain, And J. if I be lifted up from the Earth, will-draw all men after me : Christs Banner under the Gospel is lifted up, and his Banner is Love; dving Love, like the coat of Tofeph, dipt (not in the bloud of beafts) but in his own bloud. Now this Love should direct and dram. It directeth every foul whither to go for a Saviour, willing and able to fave, even to the Lord Jefus Chrift. Man was run in a Debt to infinite Justice, he that redeemeth him, must pay an infinite Price; this cannot be paid but by a person of an infinite Nature & this infiniteness can be found only in the Divine Nature. But the foul that finned must die, the finning Nature must fuffer, and without bloud there can be no remiffin; fo that the person must have an humane nature, as well as a divine nature : where thall thefe two be found but in the person of Emanuel, of a God with we? God manifested in the flish. It remains therefore that there is no other name under Heaven by which any can be found, except only the name of the Lard Jesus Christ; he was the only divine person, that united himfelf to our humane nature. Man comes into the World's loft creature that flands in need of a Redeemer a damned creature (condemned already in Gods Lands in need of Saviour, Whither now should he go has he comes to yearsof discretion, to know his condition and onlider Eternity? Whither should he go,

but

but to the Redeemers Banner? whither should he flee but to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is lifted up; and who hath upon the Cross-lifted up a Banner of Love, under which he is ready to receive every Soul that will come under him, and fight under his Colours?

The Use of this in short, is, partly to complain of this Sinful World, that come not in to the Banner of Chrift. Every man is born ad militiam, to a warfare. Now there are two Standards fet up in the world, the one is Christs Standard, the other is the Devils Standard. The Ministers of the Gospel beat up the drums for the Lord Jesus Christ, and make Proclamation, for poor Souls to come in and fight under the Standard of the King of Kings; they invite to a noble Service, they offer great wages, Grace here, Glory hereafter. But alas ! though they daily carry the Colours about, Preaching a Christ crucified; how few are perswaded to come in unto him, and to take his Press-money? how many are they that Av to the Devils Standard (his Colours are in every Alchouse.) and freely fight under his Colours against God, and the interest of God in the world, against his Gospel, his Ordinances, his Mini-Rers his Laws for the regulation of mens conversation? but ah how hard a thing is it to perfwade a Soul to take up Arms under this great Captain of our Salvation, to fight against the World, Flesh and Devil, yea though Satans head be already broken, the Worlds strength already overcome, and the body of death already nailed to his Crofs? And Christians have little to do but to triumph, and to keep the field against a broken Enemy; This is a Lamentation and fiall be for a Lamentation.

2. But Oh! that I could persuade you to fulfil the words of our Saviour now that he is lifted up. Now that his Banner which is Love is exalted, that it may draw all of you after him; Lo here, I. A Noble General, who hath already conquered, who is ready to joyn with you in this fight. 2. A Noble Canse, they are the advertaries of your Souls against which I would ingage you? It is the Lords hattel which I would have you fight, for his Glory; and he hath Proclaimed the War: And it is your battel, for your good, your Spiritual and eternal good. 3. Here is Noble Pay, a white Stine, a Crown, a new-name; Grace here, Glory hereafter, &cc. 4. It is a War that never any who durft fight valiently was overcome in, he might have a foil, but Christial ways came in to his rescue. But this is enough for the Second Conclusion. The third follows.

3. The Charch of God, and the believing Soul found more at the 3. Concl.

Love of God dorb guide them, this is one use of the Banner: while: the Colours keep in their quarters, the Souldiers keep there too; but affoon as the Colours move all the Souldiers move, March, or Fight according to the direction they have from the Standard : if the Colours by their motion direct them to do or fuffer, they do accordingly. So should the true Church of God, to should every trulybelieving Soul. As it is faid of the Ifraelites, that they were guided by the Cloud and the Pillar of fire, and till they moved they moved: not, and when they moved they flayed not; that the Love of Christ should be to every believing Soul, and to every Church of God. They should do, when the love of Christ directs them to do for him; they should suffer for him when again the love of Christ directeth them to fuffer. The love of Christ should be their Colours; That's that they should observe in all their actions and fav. Can I do this and love Chrift? can I do this and keep the love of Christ? His Banner to us is Love. Oh that now those that hear me this day, would let it be as I have faid, make the Love of Christ the principle of all their Actions! Allour Actions are of no worth that flow not from this Principle. Ah would men in all their Actions, their momentous Actions, but keep their eye upon their Colours, but eye the love of Christ, and see if this or that Action answers Christs Love to them, or would be a testimony of their love to Christ; how much Sin and wickedness might be avoided ! would men and women but move as they fee this Banner moves, as the love of Christ doth indeed constrain them; how much duty would be done which is omitted ! how free would Christians be to the poor! The Apostle saith concerning others, how dwells the love of God in them? How holy would they be in their conversations : Chriff faith, If you Love me keep my Commandments. I haften to a fourth Conclusion.

4 Concl.

4. The Love of Christ is that which united the Churches of God, and particular believers both unto Ghrist and unto one another. I told you that the Banner is a Sign of Union; that such and such Souldiers are united under such a Captain, and are one and the same Company. Christs Love unto the Souls of men, is that which uniteth them in Companies called Churches; for what is a Church, but a Company of people whom Christ hath out of his Love called out of the world, to serve him according to his will? 'Tis that which Uniteth believers among a themselves, and unto Christ; what is it that makes believers all of one beart, but the Love of Christ hed.

flied abroad upon them all , and their joynt-agreement to love Christ again, and to serve him: I shall apply this Proposition only with a wish. That all Christians knew their Colours, and were but poffeffed of this truth; for want of a right understanding or conformable walking, to which are those fad breaches and feparations, and rents amongst Christians, both as to Communion, and as to Brotherly Affection. Let particular Churches, and particular Christians, differ in an hundred things, (as it is impossible but that there should be variety of apprehentions amongst them.) certainly Christian Communion and Christian Charity should not be broken, betwixt those to whom the love of Christ is in common distributed, or who agree in the main Uniting Grace, viz. Love to Chrift. Tell me no more therefore as an Argument to perswade me, to break off Communion with Christians; or to cast them out of my most intimate affections, That these or these Christians, are not in all points of my perswafion : This man or woman thinks. that the Church should be governed by a common suffrage; another by the Elders of it; a third by a Bifhop; That this man thinks, Children should not be baptifed while they come to years of discretion, and then by dipping; another thinks Children may be baptized, and that either by sprinkling, pouring or dipping. This man thinks God should be worshipped with this or this Rite and Ceremony; another thinks it ought not to be. Let the question be only this; Doth this man fo live, fo walk, that I can by the Word of God conclude, that he is one whom Christ loves (not withstanding these failures) and one that loves Christ and his Gospel; my heart shall cleave to him? I will not presently be of his Judgment in all things, I will not have Communion with him, and be like him wherein I think he fins against God; but I will love him as a Chriftian. Christs Banner over his people is Love. And all that belong to this Banner are but one Company, and shall be one with him in Glory.

s. The Love of Christ is a fign of bin Protection to bis people. The 5. Concl. Banner they fay is for a Sign of Protection, I am fure Christs love is a feal of it. There are some that think the Metaphor of the Text, is not taken from a military Banner, but from a Custome which the Eaftern Nations had at Marriages to spread a covering over the Bride in token that the was now under the Protection of her Hufband. I am fure the believer, and the Church is under the Protection of Christy and I am fure his Love is his Banner, and engageth him to protect her, as it engageth the Eagle to carry her Chickens up-

on her wings: so God saith, I bave carried you upon Eagles wings; as it makes the Hen gather her Chickens under her wings, so it maketh Christ gather his Saints under his wings. The Scripture is full of instances to this purpose, I spare them; for tis of the Nature of Love to protect the Beloved Object. Love could not be Love if it did it not. It is a piece of that good which Love always commands for its correlate.

Use. Let therefore Christians take no care what they shall do in eviltimes. They have but one thing to take care of, viz. to find-evidences of Christs special love to them; and to find in their heartsa fountain of unfained and not-failing Love to Christ; let them take
care to keep close to the Commandments of God; that they may
abide in his Love, and for Protection let them expect what Christ-

can give them.

6. Concl.
6. The Love of Christ displayed to the World, signifieth his Victory over his Enemies, yea and the Churches, and every truly believing Souls Victory. Conquerors when they have won a Town or City, display their Colours on the walls: Our great Captain, having

conquered the World, the Flesh and the Devil, bath displayed his Love; and ordered us to hang out his Colours, to preach his Love to the world, as a Sign that the enemies are beaten, Salvation is

wone, the Saints are Conquerors. As,

Use. Oh! That you would believe this Sign (bleffed be God, your eyes see this Sign: yet) Oh you that are cowardly, doubting, fearing Christians, you that are saying, that your lusts, your Grandadversary the Devil will one day overcome you! Oh! that you would consider that Christ hath conquered Sin, Death, Hell, the World, the body of Death; so that Sin shall have no Dominion: The Devil shall never triumph over you, the world shall never prevail against you. Only fight Valiantly, you shall overcome certain.

ly.

7: Concl.

7. The Love of Christ to his people, is that which should make his Church and true believers terrible to all his and their Enemies. The Banners of an Army make it terrible; Christs Banner over his Church, over his Saints, is Love. A thing like a pillar of fire to his Israelites to direct and guide them, and to comfort them, like a dark Cloud to their enemies, to benight and confound them; when Saul had got process out of the Ecclesiastical Courts of the Jews, to persecute the poor Saints; he heard a Voice from Heaven saying, Saul! Saul! Why prosecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

Ufe. Let me tell those that have a tooth against Religion and Godlineff, and the fincere and firich Professors of it, (if there be any fuch here) that they play a hard game : The Armies of the Church and of Saints, are terrible by the Banner of Love. Let my. Soul never fee the Banner of Christs Love amongst any party to whom I oppose my felf. I am fure at one time or other I shall fall before them, Christ is Omnipotent and can-destroy his Enemies, If Bove on the behalf of his friends engage his Omnipotency, it will be a fad encounter, for those that engage against him : If you can find a party, whose Banners are, The Love of Lufts, the Love of Drunkenness, Profaneness, Vicleanness, &c. There's nothing terrible in these Banners: the Almighty hath said, he will cut them off, and Sin infeebleth Souls. But if you fee any in whose Banners is the Love of Christ, whom your Conscience telleth you Christ loveth, and whose conversations tell you they love Christ, take heed : As Christ is able to break through Briars and Thorns, because he is omnipotent; fo he is willing, because he loves them. And there is no more dreadful Vengeance, than that which Love taketh upon those that abuse the Objects of it: For the Banner of Christs Love amongst them, the Church of Christ, and every true believing Soal, should be terrible to their Adversaries.

Cant. 2. 5.

Stay me with Flaggons, and Comfort me with Apples; for I am Sick of Love.

Tis the Spoule which yet speaketh, you may know her by her Language, I am Sick of Love. Love is a Passion which prevails most upon the weaker Sex: Only (which Bernard notes) whereas before she had spoken to her beloved, here she seems to speak to ber Companions, to the Daughters of Hierusalem; which is evident also because the verbs are plural; Stay you me, Comfort you me. She partly complains of a disease, Tonk soll. I am sick of Love. 2. She calls to them for a remedy; Stay me with Flagons, Comfort me with Apples: The patient here is the Church, or the particular believing Soul under the disguise of a Lover. Her disease

r. Prop.

feele was Love; passions are expression that word, Iam Siek, Iam wounded with Love; so the Sipt. and the Arab. and other ancient versions which follow them. The Text will fall into two Propositions; what is necessary for the explication of the Text, you shall have in the Explication of those Propositions; which are these two.

1. Prop. The believing Soul may be Sick of Love.

2. Prop. Christ bath provided for bis Church, Flagons to stay it, and Apples to strengthen and comfort it when it is Sick of Love. I

begin with the first of these:

1. The believing Soul may be fick of Love, or fick with or through Love. We will first enquire, 1. What Love is here meant. 2. When a Soul may be said to be sick with Love. 3, Whence this Sickness, (through Love) ariseth in a Gracious heart. 4. What improvement may be made of this.

1. Qu. What Love is this of which the Text Speaketh?

I hope every one that hears me, understands it of a pure Spiritual Love, (of which alone this most excellent Song speaketh.) The Motaphor indeed is drawn from earnal Lovers who may be sick through carnal and impure Love, as Annon was for Thamar. Love (as I shall shew you more particularly by and by, hath a power to make the Soul sick, (let what will be the object:) It is the prevalency of the passion which makes the Soul sick. But here then may be a question, Whether the Spouse speaketh of the Love of Christ to the Soul, or of the Love of the Soul to Christ? I am not willing to straight the sense of holy Writ, dictated by an infinite wisdom, and so capable sometimes of more than one interpretation.

First therefore, it may be understood of Love in a passive sense, as the believing Soul is the Object of it.

2. It may be understood of Love in an active fenfe, as the be-

lieving Soul is the subject of it. But,

2. Qu. How or when may a Soul be said to be Sick of Love?

I answer chiefly in two cases. 1. When the heart is overcome with influences of Divine Love; such a thing may be though the heat and warmth of the Sun doth refresh and comfort us yet it may be so great an influence, as may overcome us and make us faint and sick; though nothing be more sweet than light (which is pleasant to the eye) yet there may be such degrees of it as may blind us, and offend our eyes, so though there be nothing in the

World

World so pleasant and sweet, and refreshing to the Soul of a Chriftian, as the light of Gods countenance, and the expressions of Gods Love, and savour to the Soul of the Saints yet there may be such manifestations of it to the Souls of Gods people, that they may be unable to bear it, even as unable to bear the manifestations of

Divine Love, as the manifestations of Divine Wrath.

2. This sickness of Love may also be for mant of Satisfaction: As the wise-man Prov. 13. 12. says of hope: that bope deferred maketh the heart Sick: So it is true of Love, indeed of any passion of the mind; when it works towards any object strongly, and obtaineth it not, it makes the Soul sick. The Angry man is sick because he cannot glut himself with Revenge: The Covetous manis Sick (as in Abab's case) because he cannot get the Houses, Lands, Riches, &cc. which he desires, and so of the rest according to the variety of their passions: So the gracious Soul that hath fixed itself upon a Spiritual Object, as apprehending in it a most transcendent, excellent good, may be Sick of Love, when at any time it apprehendeth the want of Divine Love to it, that (as the Aposse species as a suffer it loves, the less it seemeth again take beloved: Hence an answer is easy to the third Question:

3. Qu. Whence this Siekness of Love ariseth in a gracious

Soul

I may reduce all to two heads, upon either of which I will

discourse a little.

The First is the Souls inability to bear the faller influences of divine Love; or the total want of such influences : I say the Soul is unable to bear either. It is unable to bear the first, because it hath but a finite capacity, and there is the very same natural reason for this, as for the bodies surfeiting of its proper food, the eyes being offended with light which is its proper object. Let the object be never to proper to any faculty, yet the faculty being but finite it must be measured to it in a due proportion, or it is overcome with it. Though the Love of God, and the manifestation of it to the Soul, be the Souls proper Objects, and fuch as are more eminently fuited to its necessities than any other good things are, which in this life we are capable of syet the Soul is no more able to receive these influences in such full proportions, as God is able to measure them out to the Soul, than the eye of man is able to behold the Glory of God, which God knowing Mofes was not able to bear, therefore hid him in the hole of a Rock, that he might:

might but see a glimps of it: And as the Soul is not able to bear the full manifestations of Divine Love; so. 2. neither is it able to bear the want of it. The Soul that loveth fondly, is sick if it be not loved reciprocally; we see it amongst creatures, if a man or woman loves another in an high degree, and they be not loved again; it either produceth a Sickness in the person that so loveth; or some excessive anger, scorn or hatred. Now the gracious Soul is so far possessed with the thoughts of its own vileness and unworthiness, and of its duty to God, that it cannot be angry at God, it dareth not scorn and contemn God; hence it becomes sick of Love.

The Second Reason is the Souls weakness and subjection, and proneness to mistakes, concerning the Love of God toward it. Some may fay to me upon the former discourse; But is there any Soul in the World, that truly loves Christ and hath cause to be Sick of Love, for want of Christs Love to it? I answer not doubtless; there is not, for he hath loved us first, and his Love to us is the cause of our Love to him. But'tis one thing to be beloved of God. another thing to fee, and apprehend our felves beloved ; every Soul that truly loves Christ is truly beloved of Christ, but every fuch Soul doth not apprehend that it is so beloved and we use to fay, De non entibus et non apparentibus eadem eft ratio. It is true in this case as to the Souls passion it is all one not to be beloved; and not for the Soul to apprehend it felf beloved. Now this apprehenfion, may be wanting upon a three or fourfold account: The one natural, another Moral, a third Divine, a fourth Præternatural.

a Soul lies a long time under dark apprehensions concerning the Love of God meerly through a Spiritual ignorance, being not skilled as it might be in the boly Scriptures, and fully understanding those principles of truth laid down there, from which the Soul might with the help of its own reason, conclude the Love of God towards it. The holy Scriptures lay down marks of Gods Children in these, and leave the Application to us. Now many a Soul through want of Knowledg of these principles, is not able to conclude to itself; hence you shall observe that those Christians, that are most weak in Knowledg, are most full of these sears and doubts.

2. The cause sometimes is Natural; through some bodily di-Rempers hindring the exercise of its reason, and likewise disposing

the Soul to faspitions and fears and jealousies. This is ordinarily experimented in persons subject to Melancholy, that humour, as al-To Vapours from the Spleen, affecting the head, hath this double influence upon us: They darken our reason, we cannot invent. argue and conclude, as at other times, in any case; and besides this, they do naturally make us fearful, jealous and suspitious Now when these differencers do fall upon a person, whose Soul is posfeffed with the Love of God; they do both hinder the Soul from using of its reason to conclude from Scripture for it self, as at other times; and they do also strangely dispose the Soul to be fearful, jealous and suspicious of the Love of God, and the more because this is the Souls greatest Interest; that look as a worldly man, whose great Interest is the world and his worldly gain, under these differencers, shall be full of sears and jealouses, and suspicions, that he thalf die a beggar, or. And another that is exceeding fond of his or her Husband, Wife and Children (which they look upon as the greatest Interest in the World,) will be full of fears and fealoufies for them : So natural is it for an holy and gracious Soul that tooks upon the love of God to it, as of more worth and value, than 10,000 Worlds when it is under these diffempers, to be full of fears and jealoufies concerning it.

A third cause is Supernatural, and that is God; who sometimes for the punishment of his peoples Sins, sometimes for the trial of their Patience is pleased to hide himself from his dearest Servants, and to make them walk in the dark and see no light, which when he doth, they are sick of Love. You have an instance of this in Cant. 5.8. where you find the Spoule under a sad & solitary desertion, & seeking her beloved, the chargeth the Daughters of Jernjalem that if they found her beloved, they should sell him that she was sick of Lave.

A fourth cause of these dark apprehensions is Praternatural, and that it is from Satan; who being a Sairis hath a secret power to make suggestions too, and impressions upon our Spirits: now if you consider how ill an influence off-times a peevish Neighbour hath upon an Husband or Wife, to persuade them that their correlations do not love them, though in the mean time the tokens of their love be matters of sensible demonstration; you may easily conceive how mischievous an influence, the suggestions and impressions of this evil Spirit may be to, and upon our Spirits; especially considering the advantage he hath both from his subtiley, and from the advantages that he hath, in this respect,

that Gods Love is not obvious always to our sense, but shewn as well under chastenings and afflictions as otherwise, which (however true in itself) is as hard to be discerned by the Soul, that is incumbred with stelf, as for the Child (whiles a Child) to discern his Fathers Love in his frowns, and the use of his Rod. And thus I have shewed you both the kinds of this Love-Sickness, and the Canses of it. I have yet to make application of it.

Ufe I.

Observe here first, The Nature of Divine Love, Love (amongst oreatures) usually is a fruitful thing, and begets love in the object that it fixeth upon. Ordinarily, I fay, it doth fo amongst creatures, it always doth to betwixt the Creature and the Creator; I mean it of special distinguishing love. There is indeed a General and Common Love, with which God embraceth the whole creation; (for he preferveth both man and beaft, and hateth nothing that he hath made). This Love is not thus efficacion; it on Gods part produceth a providential care for the creature; hence God fredeth the Ravens, clotheth the graff, and canfeth his Sun to fhine, and his rain to fall upon the just and unjust. But yet he is not loved by the unfult again. But there is another pecial difting mift. ing love, which God the weth unto his people, an intense and intimate Love, discovered to the Soul in effectival Calling, Justification, the influences of bis boly Spirit : This love is like fire that begets a love again in the Soul to Chrift. No fooner is the Spoufe orried into the banquetting boufe, and difcerns that Chrift's banner over her is love; but the crys out like one ravified, Ob flay me with flaggons, and comfort me with apples, for I am fich of love; and indeed by this thall the Soul difeern that God loves it, if it finds that it doth truly and unfeignedly love God; nor will any Soul have comfortable cause to conclude the one till it find some certain evidence of the other.

Uft 2.

Secondly, Be not flattled if you meet with any Souls thus fiele, or if you find your felves sometimes thus fiele, 1. Be not startled if you meet with some Souls that are thus fiele of lave. And o not mock them, do not judge them: There are several symptomes of this love-fickness, which are common symptomes to other differences, which cause them to be misjudged by men of the world, who thus complain. It has fiele persons are often very pensive and said; so are these: they are made so by their bodily pain and indisposition, these have no such cause of sadness, nothing from the world to afflict them possibly; but the thoughts of their.

their Spiritual concernment, do every whit as highly afflict them. The pensive sed person, may indeed be diseased, and sad for his bodily anguish and indisposition; or indeed he may have crosses and afflictions in the world, and be sad for them; he may be a meeping hypocrite, but he may be and often too is like Hunnab, a person of a forcomful spirit, upon a far better account than these are. 2. As sick persons are usually restless, and can be quiet neither in bed nor up; neither standing, lying, nor walking: So it is often with these poor souls, Cant. 3. 1. The poor soul cannot rest by night or day, runs from Ordinance to Ordinance, from Duty to Duty, seeking him whom it loveth and cannot rest, because it cannot find him; it is as proper for this soul to do so, as for the sick body to do so; it is the mind which in them both is di-

furbed, though from divers causes.

The fick person is often having his or her recourse unto the Physician, and to such means as he or she conceiveth proper for the removing of his or her dittemper: Nature teacheth them this. And the love-fick Soul will also be often having her recourse, both to the great Phylician of Souls; i. c. be much in Prayer, and also to those whom this great Physician of Souls hath imployed in the world for the infruments of this Spiritual cure; to whom he hath faid, Comfort you, comfort you my people. The the love-fick Spoule, Cant. 3. 2.3. feeks him whom her Soul loveth, in the City, the Streets, and the broad places; the asks every one whom the meets, the Watchmen, as those most likely to inform her, and the daughters of Hierufalem : Do you therefore at any time fee any fuch Souls in the world? Ah do not mock them, do not call them hypocrites: God judgeth the fecret things of mans heart. Remember how much Eli was out who judged Hannah drunk, when the was only of a spiritually-fad beart, and those millaken, who Atis 2, judged the Apostles drunk with new Wine, who were filled with the holy Spirit of God. Remember that it is equal abomination to God to condemn the generation of the just, as to justifie the generation of the wicked. If indeed you fee any fo complaining, fo crying out, who in the course of their lives evidence, that they have no Love of God shed abroad in their hearts, nor any love working in their hearts towards God; you may then determine concerning them; but if you observe them in the course of their lives, walking humbly and closely with God; take heed of scorning, despising or condemning them;

Wse 3.

censures them. But there are some who under this sove-sickness, need no other to condemn them; they are ready enough to condemn themselves. To them let me turn my self, Exhorting them not presently to condemn themselves. This love-sickness is an old disease, the Spouse in my Text, in the name and person of all the believers in the world, here thus complains, I am sick of love, and so sick she is, that she calls out for Cordials.---Stay me with slagons, and comfort me with apples. But that I may speak in a little order; Consider,

First, That as the body that naturally lives, may be sick of diseases, and is subject to them, so the living, the truly spiritually living Spul may be sick of love. Scarce ever was there a Child of God in the world that had not some sits of this sickness; David had it a long time, O when will thou come unto me (saith he)? when will thou comfort me? when shall I came and appear before thee? why dost thou hide thy sace? why bast thou for saken me? My soul longeth, yea, even faintest for thee; with many other such expressions, what are they but signs of a Soul sick of love? nothing hinders but that a child of God may be sick for Spiritual love, as well as the carnal heart for carnal love, the covetous heart for worldly love. One.

Secondly consider, That as in the Natural Body there are fome distempers, which though at present are troublesom, yet are really matters of joy, considering them as Signs. The Woman that breeds Children is often sick, sally sick; but it is matter of rejoycing to her, as it signifies that God hath blessed her with a fruitful Wombi. This love-sickness is such a kind of distemper; indeed the Soul at present is straitned and wanteth, and is pained, or is over-filled and cannot bear it, which causeth a disturbance: but oh! what an admirable sign is this, that Christis formed in this Soul b that it is born again, not of siesh and blood, but of the holy and blessed Spirit of God; never yet was a carnal unregenerate heart sick for love to Christ, or with the love of Christ: O bless God for this good sickness, which Christ will in his due time cure!

Thirdly consider, That if thy sickness for love, be that thou canst not find Christs love to thee; or that thou canst not discern thy own love to Christ; It is a sickness of thy own causing, viz. through thy own mistakes and misapprehensions. Thou sayes thou canst not find that Christ lovest thee with a special dissinguishing love;

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can's thou find that thy Soul loves Christ? If so, how comes that? who barb given to him first, and is shall be required? what Soul in the world ever loved Christ, before Christ loved it; and that with a special distinguishing love? Doest thou say, Ah! but I cannot find that my soul loves Christ. Why art thou then troubled, because thy Soul apprehendeth, or fancieth, that he doth not love thee? In this thy serious trouble about his love, to thee, thou apparently evidences thy love to him; and in the evidencing of that thou makest it apparent that he loveth thee.

Obj. May then every Soul that owns a love to Chrift, or complains for mant of Chrifts love to tryube concluded to love Chrift, or to have

Christs love Agia Alima

Vol. I answer no : This concluding, either relates to my neigh-

bour, or tampfelf. His conton diwership web od . this

r. If my Neighbour hears me thus complaining, fees me thus troubled, and hears me thus expressing the cause of my trouble, and sees nothing in the course of my life, but what evidenceth my Holiness, and that my Soul is pressing hard after God, and walking close with him, he hath no reason to conclude that I am an hypocrite, but is bound thus to judge of me; and to pity, help and pray for me; for secret things belong to God: but not-withstanding this, I may be a false hypocrite.

2. As to my felf, if my heart tells me that I am ferious in these complaints; and that I do not complain of that part which aketh not, but that this is my true grievance: And 2. I find that my Soul is at this time united to the fear of God, and that I dare not wilfully sin against him, I may then conclude; that my sickness is

a fickness of love, and a good fickness.

In the last place, what you have heard, That a gracious Soul Use 4. may be fick of love, may be useful to every gracious Soul to learn it patience under the want of those degrees of sensible enjoyments which it may be other Souls meet with: yea, and under this love-fickness through want of those enjoyments. The affurance of Divine Love, being the matter of divine promises, and the sweetest object in the world, is highly desirable by every gracious Soul; yet is it distributed to the Saints in a proportion very unequal (confidering persons receiving it) though highly equal if we respect the wisdom and justice of him that gives it: But many a poor Soul fins by too impatient desires of it, and laying all the stress of their Souls Salvation upon it. This is that which I would have you

take beed of; defire it fervently, yet modefily, humbly, and with Submission to the Divine Will, who knows best when to give, and when to withhold it; to whom to give it, and from whom to restrain it. Remember, 'tis not of the Necessaries to Salvations, though an high and excellent accommodation to us in our Pilgrimage. Confider this, God can eafily make thee fick in his Banquetting-boule; he can eafily thine so upon thee, as to offend thy eyes that way. If therefore God will not shew thee all his Glory. (because he sees thou art not able to bear it;) yet be thou content if he will but hide thee in the hole of the Rock Christ Jefus, and thew thee his back-parts, and make his goodnes pass before thee : If thou haft but the rayment of Christs Righteousness to cover thy nakedness, and the food of his promise to feed on by Faith, be thou therewith content; till God give thee of the finest wheat and hony out of the Rock. If thou canst but behold his face here in Righteousness, when thou amakest (at furthest in the Refurrection) show that be fatisfied with bis likenefs.

Cant. 2. 5:

Stay me with Flaggons, and Comfort me with Apples; for I am Sick of Love.

I told you the last day, that the Spouse in this Text doth two things: 1. She complains of a malady. She is sick of Love.

2. She intreats for a Remedy; stay me with Flaggons, comfort me with Apples; where you may observe, 1. To whom she speaks. Not to her beloved, for the words in the Heb. are in the plural number: now her beloved was but one; doubtless therefore it is to the Daughters of Hiernsalem, the third fort of persons made interlocutors in this excellent dialogue; by which (as I have heretosore shewed you,) she means the members of the Church, under which notion I understand as well the Ministers of the Gospel, (essewhere in this Song mentioned under the Notion of Watchmens) as private Christians. 2. Observe what she would have, that is expressed in those words; Stay me with Flaggons, comfort me with Apples, where observe, 1. The thing she desires, to be stayed, to be comforted.

comforted. 2. The means the directs as proper for this Staying and Comforting, Flaggons, Apples, the supposeth these in the hands of those to whom the speaks; otherwise she would never have call'd to them for the application of them to her. The Proposition is this.

Prop. That Christ hash betrusted to his Church, Plaggons and Apples, for the staying and comforsing of the Souls of his Saints that are sick of Love; for which a believing Soul will call to the Ministers and members of the Church when it is Sick of Love; and it is their duty to administer them to it. I shall handle this Proposition by way of Explication, Confirmation and Application. By way of Explication, I will enquire, 1. What is understood by Flaggons and Apples here.

2. What this staying and Comforting means.

1. Qu. What is meant by thefe Flaggons and Apples?

The words are אשישות and באשישות : The former word we translate Flaggons: the radical word according to Paginne is DUN and fignifies fundamentum a foundation according to Avenarius. It is W'UN and fignifies the ribs or pieces of board of which a wineveffel is made up : Hence this word 17 010 fignifieth an Hogshead of wine, or a Can, or any other veffel of wine made up of fuch pieces of wood, as an Hogshead is; fuch a quantity as they judged sufficient for a man for a day, the word (excepting this text) is only twice found in holy writ from which you may judg the true fenfe of it in this Text, 2 Sam. 6.19. David dealt amongst the people a good piece of flesh, and a Flaggon of winesand fo, a Chro. 16.3. where the same words are repeated : by which it appears, that the Hebrews used this word to express a veffel of wine holding a convenient portion; the just quantity we know not. Hence it appears that the Septuagint are mistaken in translating this & publis. and fo all the Versions that follow them; for by these two other Texts of Scripture now quoted it is plain, it fignifies a Veffet of fuch liquor arthey afed to drink; which was not Unguents, &cc. but a figure, a double figure must be Here acknowledged. 1. The Veffel is put for the wine in be Veffel; Continens pro re contents, (an ordinary figure in Scripture.) 2. A Metaphor must also be acknowledged; for that which is here to beflived and comforted is the Sout, and the Stay and Comfort, spoken of, is not the firengthening, and reviving of the animal Spirits. Now the wounded Spirit is not to be flayed with a cup of wine. By Flaggons therefore here must be understood fome spiritual thing, which hath

Prop.

the same vertue as to an afficied fainting Soul, that Wine hath to the fainting Spirits: What that is we will enquire anon. The word translated Apples is DIBDD: the word is TBD commonly asked in the Heb. to lignify an Apple; which being generally acknowledged to be cordial, and ordinarily used and applied to that end, by an easy Metaphor in this place, Apples figuity any Spiritual thing that hath a like vertue, and is properly comfortable for a Christians Soul. By the Flaggons and Apples in the text then, is to be understood, whatsoever God hath committed to bis Church which may be Instrumentally applied to any Soul sick or wounded with Love, which both in it a vertue, either from its own nature, or from a divine Ordination to stay and comfort it. But,

2. Qu. What is this to flay and Comfort the Sponfe?

Here also are two words used, the first which we translate flay is MIDD. The fecond which we translate, Comfort me, is 'Illa. The Original of the first is 700 which signifieth to underprop. to fultain a thing by putting Comething under it: it is used Dent. 34 9. Fofbua was full of the Spirit of wifdow, for Mofes bad laid bis bands upon bim : fo Num. 27. v. 2 3 which may either be underflood, that Mofes bis wisdom did as it were underprop and belp bim; or (as it rather feems) Mofer by Gods appointment had laid his bands upon bim, in token that God had fet him apart for the Government of his people, and from that day for ward the Lord by his special influence did upbold and bely follows. It is often used in the Scripture to fignify Gods upholding his people; If. 5. 16. Pfol. 27) 17. Pfal. 112.8. Pfal. 51. 14. The Sept. translate it Sheleale, and well; for all such underpropping is a strengthening of the thing that is so upheld and underpropped: The other word is Allen, we translate it comfort me. The word is 757, Avenarius faith, it fignifies to spread a low-bed or a Couch, upon which a man lies down for his Reft, eafe or delight. It is here used in the second Conjugation, and but once more so in all the Scripture, vis. Tob. 17. 13. I bave made my bed in darkness. Hence some would have the text read; make me a bed with Apples, and to this fense is the Sept. version subdears: so the Vulg. Lat. and the Arab. and the Syr. hedg me in with Apples; Montanu, frengthen me with Apples. The Tigurine verfion and Pafcator, Substernite, Tremelin and Junim, Suftentate. The difference is only in terms: The fense of all is one, and the fame.

In regard that a bed, or Couch is a place of Ease, Reft or Delight,

the

the making and preparing such a bed, is an action, by which one is instrumental to our Ease, Rest and Delight; and in regard that Apples and Persumes are things that are Cordial and Comfortable to the Spirits, the action of men by which they so persume, and make sweet our beds is an action, by which they are surther instrumental to us for our ease and comfort. Hence by a Meraphor, the Sponse speaking to her companions, to use what means were in their power to use, to uphold her sainting Spirit, and as it were to underprop, and comfort, and so consequently strengthen her, she speaks to them in this Metaphorical dialect; which signifies no more than this: I know my beloved hath committed that to you, which as to a Soul in my state, hath the same vertue, that mine and Apples have to the Vital Spirits under a deliquium. Now I beseech you apply them to my Soul that is lick of Love, for the Stay, Strength, Comfort, and Upholding of it.

I have now done with the Explication of the terms: I come to the more first explication of the things in the Proposition; there are (as you see) three branches, which I shall open and con-

firm feverally and then apply them all jointly.

1. Mem. Christ hath committed to his Church, somethings to be by them dispensed out to the Love-sick Souls of his people, which have the same vertue, to the bealing of a fainting sick Soul; as winder Apples have, for the comforting or staying fainting Spirits. This is the first member where I have two things to doe: 1. To enquire what these things are. 2. To enquire how and for what end, and to whom they are committed, and to prove it.

1. Qu. What are these things, which have this Spiritual Staying, Comforting Vertue for the Soul, as Wine and Apples have for the

animal Spirits?

As to this Interpreters strangely abound in their senses. Gregory understands the more and less persed Christians; Bernard, the frame of Faith and good works. But certainly they did not duly consider that the Spouse here is not speaking to her beloved, who indeed could thus stay and comfort her; but to the Daughters of Jerusalem, who could not do it otherwise than by their good example. Our own Annotators therefore and the Dutch Annuators, Pisasor, Ainsanth, &c. do better expound it of the promises of the Goppil, or the Dodrines of it; or (as the Dutch expressly) of the holy Scriptures which contain both promises and precepts, and both useful in the case. The Caldre Paraphres expounds to of the Dage.

thinks of the Law, but Mr. Ainsmorth saith well: These (in the thrick notion of the Law) are those which wound the Soul, and make it Sick. I shall interpret it in two particulars: 1. The boly

Scriptures. 2. The Gofpel-Ordinances and Institutions.

1. The boly Scriptures. These are committed to the Church, not to canonize and reject what the pleafeth, but with the Seal of God upon them; fo that nothing must be by her added to them; nor any thing of them diminished: The Apostle makes it the priviledge of the Tewish Church, Rom. 3.2. that unto them were committed the Oracles of God. They were committed by Saint Paul to Timothy, and by him to be committed to others, faithful men; who fould be able to teach others. They are committed to the Ministers of the Church, to be by them publickly interpreted, opened and applied authoritatively. They are committed to all the members of the Church, that they may read therein all the days of their Life; by them examine the Doctrines of their teachers whether they be true or falle, All. 17. 11. from them (with the use of their own reason) conclude in all things what they ought to do, and to avoid, and not be the meer fervants of men; out of them infruel their families what they ought do; and in that private manner which becomes their private Station, administer & word in feafon to their brethren. by way of private Conference, Adminision, Exhertation, &c. Now look what vertue Wine hash to comfort the Spirits that are faintsing or Apple to be cordial to one that is Sick of the fame yea fuffnite more vertue have the holy Scriptures in this case; though from a different principle, God hath put a natural vertue into the Wine, and into Apples, that they all from a natural necessity. with the concurrence only of an Ordinary Providence, upholding the natural powers, and operations of these Creatures : But as to the boly Scriptures, they have their vertue from a Divine Infinition, and the Special concurrence of the Spirit of Grace Thus 2 Tim. 3. 15, 16. Dry are able to make a man wife anso Salvation; through faith mbieb win Jesus Christ. --- They are profitable for doctrine for reproof, for correllion for infraction in Righteoufheft; That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished to all good works.

Secondly, The Ordinances of the Gospel; they are also as Plagrans and Apples. These are committed to the Church: They are of a double nature, Publish: Such as are administed by a publish perform an officens the Church; some of which can be administred by the other lawfully, as the Sucraments; others may be administred

by private Christians, but not in the Tame manner as private perfons may pray, but not in the publick affemblies of the Church. The private Christian may exhart bis family, and open the Scriptures to them, but not in the publick affemblies; he may offer words in feafon to an afflicted perfon; but thefe fame actions done by the publick Offices, are done more authoritatively, more in the name of Chrift, and the greater bleffing may be expected, though Gods bleffing is not wanting to any appointment of his whoever be his fervant in the administration, if he acts in order, and keeps his place: other Ordinances are Private; fuch as family-prayer, instruction, private admonitions, conferences, &c. Rom. 15, 14. Epb. 6. 4. Col. 3. 16. &c. Now I fay these have the same vertues as to the reviving of a Sick fainting Soul, that Apples and Flaggons of Wine have to revive the Spirits of one that is in an a fwoun. I need not infift upon the proof of it, experience proveth it : David indeed doth not fay it was the word preached, or opened; but how often dorn he fay in that excellent Pfal. 119. Thy word bath comforted me; thy word bath quickened me, &c. This is enough to have fooken to the first Member of the Doctrine.

2. Mem. That the believing Soul in the day of its Love-fickwell, will call to the Ministers and members of the Church; for the application of thefe things to it. This needs no great proof, Ja Saphas in his perplexity calls for a Prophet of the Lord, David faith feech me the Ark : even Saul himfelf (that never cared for Sawire!) when he was fick in his mind though nor of Love, calls for Samuel; Job faith, that when a man is in affliction, If there be a meffenger with him, an interpreter, one of a Thouland, to the unto man his uprightnefs: Then be it graciom unto bim, and faith, deliver bim from going down into the pis, I base found a ranfome. When the three thousand were pricked at the heart, Act. 2, 38. mey cried out, Men and bretbren what hall we do to be faued ! To did the Jaylor, Ad. 16. The reason of this is a natural principle, water upon a Spiritual illumination. The Natural Principle is that every one must necessarily in distress feek out for a proper remedy. The Soul fick of Love is in a diffress, a great diffress: Nature feels this and acteth necessarily in seeking out for a remedy. Now he believing Soul being Spiritually enlightened by God, feeth that God hath in his holy Scripture, and in his Ordinances, haid up an heating vertue for it, and that he hath committed thefe things to his

Job. 3. 23

Ministers.

Ministers and to his Charch, to be orderly and authoritarively in his name dispensed out; hence it doth as naturally call to them for this help, as the lick person calls for help to the Physician ; or he that is wounded to the Chyrurgeon.

I am come to the third Member of the Proposition.

2 Mem. It is the duty both of Ministers and private Christians, in their refective places, to relieve the afflicted Souls of believers with the fuitable application of the holy Scriptures, and the administration of the Ordinances of God to them. This you shall find to have been the practice of the Prophets and the Apostles, and private Christians, quite throughout the Book of God: Now this duty arifeth from a double head. 1. The Law of God revealed in Seripture. 2. The Law of God revealed in the light of Nature.

1. The Law of God revealed in Scripture, evinceth it ; it is a piece of the Ministers Commission, If. 40. 1. Comfort you, comfort you my people, it is a piece of their work in perfeding the Saints, for which very end God hath fet them in his Church Eab. 4. 12. It is the wickedness with which God charged the corrupt Priefts, Ezecb. 34. 4. The difeafed have you not frengthened. neither have you healed that which was fick, neither bave you bound

up that which was broken.

2. But suppose there were no fuch express Scripture; yet the light of Nature will evince this to be their duty. The Law of Charity written in Nature commandeth every person to relieve his brother in mifery, if it be in his band to do it; and most eminently abligeth him when he may do it, and do no injury to himself. That's the case here; the distresses of the Soul are the saddest diffresses, a wounded Spirit who can bear? It is in the power of the Ministers of the Gospel, and of private Christians, to be instrumental in their relief, by applying the Scriptures to fuch Souls, and administring the Ordinances of God to them; and this they may do without loss or prejudice to themselves (indeed they eught to do it, though with outward peril to themselves); and therefore they are highly obliged to it by the common Law of Charity to their neighbours. I have opened the Doctrine in all its three Branches: I come now to the Application.

This (in the first place) may let us fee the great Priviledges of the Church of God, and the advantages which those (above other people) have, who live in the bosom of it. The Church is the, that keeps Christs Plaggons and Apples; yea, his bread of life is

Vie I.

Ezek. 34.4.

in her Store-boufe, and his Wells of Salvarian are within her Territories. Oh happy are they that are within her Gares, that are fojourners within her House! There the wildom of God is minifelted from day to day. And let me add further. That the more pure any Church is, the more happinels this it. The truth is this. The name of a Church is fo glorious a name, that almost all Societies of people (whoever heard of the Scriptures) have been ambitious of getting it, and retaining it. The Synagogue of Rome, will by no means lose the name of a Church; and in all times and places, those who abhorred nothing more than the lives of true Gospel Ministers and Christians, yet would be called by the name of a Church : And I will not dispute it, but that in the eye of humane Law, a wife may be a wife, and a whore too: But certainly the pure Church of God, is the excellent Society. I call that Church pure, that keeps moft firitly, and purely mithout mixture, the boly Scriptures, and the Ordinances of God. And every Church is more or less pure, as the doth this or faileth in it; and accordingly is more or less desirable. You know it is possible for those that keep Wine to adulterate it by other mixtures, and make it meaker, yea, to make it pernicious. And truly fo it is in the power of a Church, fo to mix up the Truths and Ordinances of God with the inventions and pollutions of men, that much of the virtue and efficacy of them shall be loft, and Death may be in the Prophets pot; and although the Ordinances of God . like Gold and Silver, be separable from the dross, and being so separated, are as before; yet till that refinement and separation, the Compannion of that Church may be of little advantage, and comfort, year, finful and unlawful. The Pharifees had (in our Saviours time) made fuch a mixture, as had made the Law of God of no effect; and the Papifts have done fo fince, and do fo at this day : They have the name of a Church & prateres nibil. Cordials you know must be kept pure and unmixed, or they presently lase their good and excellent ufe. Let this be the first Ufe.

From the second member of the Proposition: Let prophane Use 2:, men and women in the world take heed of mocking at poor Christians crying out to their Ministers and to their Godly Friends, Stayme with Flaggons, and comfort me with Apples. It is

the faying of our Divine Poet,

None shall in bell fuch bitter pangs indure, As those that mack at Gods mays of Salvasion.

This

This is Gods way of Salvation, he hath appointed Ministers In his Church to comfort his people, and to bind up their wounds; and private Christians to be helpful one unto another; he hath for this end betrufted his Church with his holy Scriptures, and with his Ordinances, &c. This the poor Soul understands, believes, and naturally calls to them for that help which God hath betrufted them with for her use and benefit; who art thou that mockest? who but a fool mocks at the starved beggar, of the rich man a bit of bread? at the poor fick creature that crys to the Physician of the body, For Gods Jake to do Something for it. And why shall not the Soul fricitually fick, whose disease is more grievous, call to the Spiritual Physician for help, but presently it must be by the prophane Atheists of the world, be counted an hypocrite? who art thou who can'it not discern the heart, and yet wilt usurp the place of God, and be Judge concerning it? what though fome may pretend to this Love-fickness, and indeed ail no fuch thing art thou the Judg of it? or how doft thou know that this is the case of this or that Soul? Thou wilt not censure every one that begs, as one that needs not; because there are fome fuch : Nor every one that goes to the Phylician as diffembling, because some may be more sick in mind that in body: whence is it therefore that thou art so judging and censorious here, but from an Atheistical and prophase Principle; thou believelt no fuch thing as a wounded Spirit, nor any fuch thing, as any vertue in the Word, and Promises of God, and Ordinances of God for the healing of it.

From the third Branch, Learn what manner of persons the Ministers of Christ, yea, and all true Christians should be, viz. Such as should be able to stay a Love-sick Soul with Flaggons, Christs Flaggons, and to comfore it with Apples. 2: Such as should be faithful, and thus indesvour to stay and comfore poor Souls. They are St. PsuPs two Characters of a good Minister; such as shall be able and faithful men. Alas! how sew is the number of such people; yea, of such Ministers that are able to speak a word in season to an afflicted Soul! How aptly may those sharp words of the Prophet be applyed to many Ministers? Except, 34.2, Sou of man Prophecy against the Shepherds of Israel, and soy unto them, Thus saith the Lord God to the Shepherds; Wo be so the Shepherds of Israel, that seed themselves. Should not the Shepherds feed the flocks. Tim eat the flock, and you clothe your selves with the wool;

Use 3.

you kill them that are fed, but you feed not the fleck. The differed bave you not firengthened, neither have you bealed that which was fich, neitber bave you bound up that which was broken, neither have you brought again that which was driven away, neither bave you lought that which was loft, but with force and cruelty have you ruled them. Nay, how many are there that wound and kill in flead of curing, with prophane fcoffs and calumnies? The children ask for the bread and fift of a Coffel-Dodrine, a juft interpretation of Scripture, a lively powerful Sermon, and what have they but the Stone ; yea, the Scorpion of an impertinent, infignificant, unfavoury discourse ? As sure as the Lord liveth, be will one day require the flock at these mens bands; and earle them to cease from feeding bis flock -- and deliver the flock from their months. They are neither able nor faithful; or if able, to be fure not faithful: In the mean time (my brethren!) let us take heed what we do s let us flude the Scriptures, labour to be poffeffed of Christs Flaggons and Apples, that we may be able to speak a word in season to affiled Souls; and let us be fuithful; Let us not wound but cure, and not go about to care with the charms of foelif Quibbles, falle notions, and impertment fancies; but with those which are indeed Christs Flogons, and with those Apples which we find in Christs Oreherd. Apples of Sodem will not do this great work. and let us remember ffill, we can but offer the Wine and the Applen. it is God must imble the Soul to apply them, and must work this great cure.

Cant. 2. 6.

His left band was under my bead, and bis right band embra-

IN the ancient Versions of the Text, I find no difference of reading; five that some read the Verb in the Present Tense, some in the Future. In the Heb. it is in the Future Tense, and I' find Bernard, building a note upon it, of which (possibly) more anon. And some read them in the form of a Prayer, Let bit less bandbe under me, See, others in the form of an Affertion; His less

hand was wilder me. I shall first speak to the Connexion of the words with the former; then to the fense of them in themselves. In the former Verie the had complained, that the was fick & Love : the had called to the Watchmen, or to the Daughters of Hierufalem, Toftay ber with Flaggons, and to comfort ber with Apples ; the knows, they cannot help her, if the Lord doth not belp: here therefore the calleih to her Lord, and prays that his left band might be under her bead, and his right band might embrace her. Or if you take the words in the form of an affertion; they let us fee how ready Christ is to come in to the relief of that Soul that waiteth upon him in the way of his Ordinances; the no fooner defires and crys to the Watchmen, and to the Daughters of Hiernfalem, Stay me with flaggons, and comfort me with apples ; but the fees cause to cry out rejoycing, His left hand was under me, and his right band dorb embrace me. Non fuftinet Dilette modestiam ; adeft, neg, enim moram facere poteft; tantis desideriis evocatus, faith Bernard, He is not able to contain himfelf, he comes prefently, being called, with to ereat defires. If we understand the Verb in the Future tenfe. as indeed it is in the Heb. it doth not fo much fpeak the Spoules joy for her present enjoyments, as her faith as to the future enjoyments of her beloved: If we understand a Verbunderstood to the former part, and refer the Verb expressed only to the latter; then it declares the rife of her Faith, as to future enjoyments from her present enjoyments; and shews her thankfulness for the leffer kindness which she bad received from ber beloved; that although as yet his right hand had not embraced her, (the only hoped for that, and believed) vet the thankfully takes notice of the kindness of his left hand, while the waits for his right band : Difce in referendo gratiam non effe tardus aut fegnis, &c. (faith Bernard) the thus teacheth us thankfulness for the least manifestations of Divine Love.

For the sense of the words, I hope every one will in them understand a Metaphor. God is (saith Bernard) in sua natura tam simplex ut non babeat partes; tam unus ut non babeat numeros: So simple in his own Nature, that he hath no parts, so much one that there are no numbers in him. It is a Metaphor drawn from a Lover, who lends his beloved object the benefit of his left band, to hold up her head; of his right band to hold her up and embrace her. And when the Spoule speaks of Christs right and left band, it only signifies his power and ability to uphold and sup-

port ber in ber Love-siekness, and his readiness at that time to embrace and entertain her with all possible expressions and demonstrations of love. Bernord in regard of the usage of the terms of Right and Lest band, to signishe prosperity and adversity, understands here by the lest band, Gods Word of threatning, by his right band his Word of promise. Greg. Mag. understands by the first, the present life, by the latter shat which is to come. I sather understand the terms, as signifying. That a whole Christ, all his power, and all his goodness, is ready to be exerted for the relief of the Souls of his poor people; his lett hand is ready to put under their heads: For their whole head is sick, and their whole heart is faint, his right hand is ready to embrace them. I come now to the Propositions of Doctrine which arise from the Text, of which the chief are these:

That all the Souls firitual relief in any bour of diffres, in from the Prop. 1.

Lord Fefus Christ.

That Jesus Christ is ready to support and relieve the Souls of all Prop. 2. Believers, in the day of their spiritual sickness.

That the least manifestations of special distinguishing Love, are Prop. 3.

certain pledges of the fuller manifestations of it in Gods due time.

That the gracious Soul well be thank ful for the leffer manifestations Prop. 4. of Gods love to them, and from the receipt of them, will by Faith conclude, that it shall receive the highest and greater manifestations of is.

Of all these shortly in their order: And they comprehend the

most that I can find interpreters hinting upon the Text.

That all the Souls relief, either by way of support or comfort in a day of spiritual distress, is from the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spoule in the preceeding Verse called to others, to the Watchmen, to the Danghters of Hierusalem; but it must be her beloveds lest hand under ber bead, that alone can stay her. This she affirms here, whether you take her words in the form of a Prayer, or in the form of an Assertion: If in the form of a Prayer, it signifies, that though the spake to Ministers, and to private Christians, as to Gods Instruments in this case; yet she knew that healing was not in them, for the slies unto her beloved ultimately: Or it you take the words in the form of an Assertion, they still signific the same thing. It was Christs less hand that did the dead, it was the emporacing of his right hand that retreshed and comforted her, before I come to prove this Point, let me shortly open it; which I shall do in this one Conclusion.

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Concl. All the Spirtrual rellef which the Soul bath, is from Christ efficiently, and meritorionfly, and ar to the impard application of itschough it may be from the Ordinances and Servants of God inframentally externally and mediately, as they are means which the Lord lefus Christ useth in the staying, upholding, and comforting of poor Souls. I thewed you the last day that the Word and Ordinances of God, are facred means which God hath appointed for the upholding and comforting of poor Souls: He hath commifficated his Ministers to comfort bis people; but they are but Inftruments; the healing and ffrength is not in them; they do but prepare the way of the Lord. 10b. 28. v. 12, Where shall wifdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? he answereth himself. 1. Negatively, v. 14. The depth faish it is not in me, and the fea faith it, is not be me, &c. But where is it then v. 20. Whence then cometh wildom ? and where is the place of understanding? v. 23. God understandeth the way thereof, and be knoweth the place thereof. The Queffion here is, Where is peace? mbere is frengib for a weak. Christian? where is healing for a wounded Soul? The Minister falthat is not in me : As Jacob faid to Rachel (Am I a God that I flould give Children ? fo the Ministers fayes) Are me Gods to lift up . deaft down Soul? The private Christian fays, it is not in me. The Ordinances of God fay, it is not in us; where then is bealing to be found? it is to be found in Chrift. Chrift understanderb the way. thereof; and be knoweth the plac thereof. It is from Christ meritorion to is his purchase: It is from Christ efficiently, it is his peace; he gives, he applies peder and beating to the poor Soul. Man foreads. the platter, God makes it flick : God hath not only given the Scriptures, from the application of which our peace is; But he doth apply the Scriptures to our Souls by the application of which we have frength, healing peace, &c. Whether the Soul be relieved by the appolding of Christs left hand or by the comforts and imbraces of his left hand, the case is the fame, both one and the other are from Christ; we are strongsbened with might b. his Spirit Epb. 3. 16. According to bin glorious power, Col. 1. 11. Tean do all soings through Christ which strengthenest me, Phil. 4. 13. Uphold me. Wirb sby free Spires, faith holy David, PfM. 51. 13. The Lord up-Bolder Babe Apprendr. Pfal. 25: 17. wieb bis band, v. 24. Thy right. Band Apholder we. Pfal. 83. B. For comforts, Trees I am beading forfeth you If. 51. 72. If is he that comforteth with all Tribute on, a Cor. 7. 4. It's bu amforts that delight the foul, Pfal. 94.

19.

rp. Our confolotions abound by Christ, 2 Cor. 1. 5. But this is enough to have spoken to you in the proof of it from Scripture. Let us but consider it in reason, and we shall see it must be true. To this purpose let us consider, 1. The pare affected, 2. The nature of the distemper. 3. The way of application which alone can effect the cure; and from a view of all these we shall see it necessary, that Christs right or left hand should do it.

1. The part affected bere, is the mind and foul; the Phylician can give Phylick to the outward man; but who can give Phylick to the inward man fave God alone, he that fearceth the heart? there are some parts of the body to which the Phylician can make no direct applications, because the passages through which what a man cats and drinks, doth pass, are not near to them, but the Soul lies yet more secret and hidden from mans application; and God

alone that knows it, is able to cure it.

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But Secondly, Let us confider the nature of the diffenper; for the mind of man is subject to a variety of difeafer and diffempers In the Soul; there are some light doubts and fears, and fernotes, which many times a man may be very instrumental to cure : forne lighter diffempers they are; as if a man now through want of a due knowledg of the things of God, harn fome doubts and troubles upon his Spirit, as to this or that thing, many a time a man with the ordinary concurrence of Providence contributeth much But the diffemper of which we are fpeaking to his cure. is a more intrintick diftemper, the Souf is flet for Love; it loves and cannot differn that it is beloved again ! It feareth that its find are not pardoned, that it is not one to whom Christ hath inputed, or will impute bis Rigbteonfriefs; it fears that God hath forfaken it, that its God hath forgotten it. There is no rational way to cure this Soul but either to perfusale it that it needeth not value the Love of God and Christ fo much ; and as foon can a man be perfwaded that there is no need of the Sun; or the hongry man that he hath no fuch cause to defire his daily breid as you can pertwade this Soul of a needlefnels of the parden of the bin. the fense and affurance of Gods love, &c. Or elle Secondly you ning perferade and affere the Soul of the Love of God in Christ somards it. Now what man in the World can do this? Man indeed thay hear the cale of an afflicted Soul and he may judge deop to "He may belo on the faith and comfort of a croubled Christian by tel-ling it of the promite of God and by attoring a thirt of the or thefe things be in it of a truth, it need not doubt and fear: but a-

pear by the third thing :

3. And that is the way of Application necessary; which is by way of Impression upon the beart, it is the heart that is wounded, and to that the cure must be applied. I will speak comfortably to ber (faith Gud by his Prophet;) in the Heb. it is, I will Speak to her beart. Man can but fpeak to the Ear; it is true, man hath a natural power of applying in some degrees to the heart the found which he receiveth at his Ear, viz. by meditation; but this will not do; as a man oft times wants a power to believe what he reads and hears, because he believes them not true. For it is impossible a man should believe what he thinks to be falfe. So though the Soul may hear of the promises, and hearing them may meditate upon them, and so apply them to its heart by a natural act; yet he cannot imprint them upon his heart; this must be the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, by a mighty secret power inabling the Soul to look upon these promises as belonging to it self. As in the work of Regeneration; It is not enough that the Minister preach the hw of God, and the man hears it, and when he hath heard, meditates on it; but above and besides all this, God must write his Law in his peoples hearts, and by an Almighty power transform the heart into the likenels of it. So it is in the work of comforting, and strengthening, and raising up a dejected Love-fick Soul; it is not enough (to perfect the cure) that the Soul be told of the promifes, hears them, reads them, meditateth on them; but there must be a mighty power of God to make the impression of them upon the heart, fo as the Soul shall believe them to belong unto it in particular, and to be its portion.

Secondly, As this truth is shus evident from Reason, so it is also evident by Experience. For it a Soul thus lick, could be cured by any other hand then that of Christ; why are they so long field. It is true frome poor Souls may live in an ill Air, where they may want an Interpreter, one of a thousand, one that is able to speak any thing to a wounded Soul; and may wound instead of curing, as some of the matchines in this Song do side world is full of Quacks in Divinity as well as in Phylick; but befides these, how many experiences have we of troubled Spirits under the ministry of able, and publick Preaching of the Gospel, and as to private offers of it to their

their Souls? they tell them the promites and the out the Riches of the Love of God to Sinners; but the Plainters will assistic God withholds his own left hand, and doth not give out his mighty power upon the Souls; and when we have faid what we can, yet the Soul is troubled and caft down, and refuseth to be comforred; yet let none fay, if this be true what need of Preaching? what matter who be the Minister, if he cannot work this Cure ? if the efficacy of the word and Ordinances doth not depend upon the Minister? I presume that none would be so irrational and regardless of himself as to say so concerning Physicians or Physics for his body. For though it be the Lord that bealeth, yet he doth it ordinarily in the use of means. Hezekiah must lay a plaister of Figs to the fores yea, and of proper means too, and therefore every prudent man if he be fick will take Phylick, yea and that not of Empyricks, but of able skilful Phylicians, because of Gods usual concurrence with proper means. So certainly, every prudent Christian, though he believes, that it is Christ and Christ alone, that can cure the fick Soul, yet for as much as Christ worketh this Care in the use of means and of such means as (from his institution) are most proper for that end, every Christian will take himself concerned to prize and value Ordinances; to wait upon God in them, as they are: dispensed out by such whom his Soul judgeth most able and faithful, and with whom God doth please ordinarily to concurre: In this caution I have prevented my felf. A firtle to the application; you may if you please look upon what I have last said, as one branch of the application of this doctrine. I shall proceed to add a word or two more.

1. Let then every Soul look upon us and upon all creatures, as he 1. Use. should look upon us and them, and not think of any above what he ought to think. The best of Ministers are but as spolls and Puel, poor creatures whom God useth to plant and to water; but he is God that must give the increase; we are no Gods, to give unto Souls Strength and Comfort: We are helpers on of their Faith and by, that's all our Notion. There is a tempting Devil that possesses that many a Soul, and we are not able to cast it out. And hence let all sober Christians learn two things:

First, Nos to pilific a painful godly Minister, became he does not find that Comfort and Strength under his Ministry subject he desired. Indeed there are some girst deserve to be withing a fitch as make themselves vile, and by their lead lives, careless discharge of their

places,

The actions line of a Linux-fick Soul is in and from Christ.

placed, fortill ignorance and dead and unprofitable Preaching, problaint to the world, that the Chareb laid an erring band apon abon, when the feet them to work in Gods Vinyard, whom God hath forbidden to take his law into their mouths, and who apparently have neither still nor will. But I say, if the Minister be a godly man, a painful. Preacher, one able to interpret the will of God, take heed of wilifying him upon this single account, That then cant not ediffe; he never did speak good to thee, never spake a Comforting Strengthening word to thee; probably the fault is in thy self, in thy Just or prejudice: Possibly God hath withheld the strength and comfort (which another had that sate by thee) from thy Soul. It is Christs left hand must be under thy head, or aby Minister will do little good at thy car (though be speaks and lives like an Angel).

2. You that in the day of your Spiritual distresses, do come to Ordinances, and come to Godly Ministers, take heed of raising your expellations soo high upon them. They are not Gods. Oh! do not think them Gods; they may inform, and exhort, and offer promises; but God alone, Christ alone, can give true comfort

to the Soul.

In the second place, Is it Christs left hand under the bead of the foul that can alone comfort it in the day of its fpiritual diffrefs? Ah! how much then stand all these Love-fick Souls concerned, to take heed (in the day of their fickness) of doing any thing which may provoke Christ to withhold his left band from them; or if it be bander them, to withdraw it from them. So fast is the Covenant of Grace, so near is the Union between Christ and a believers Soul, that fin cannot part them eternally, no nor diffolve the Union in this life; but it may cause the withdrawing of Christs left hand from wader the head and then a Christian will find his head too heavy for his body; it may cause the withholding of it, if thou half it not, and the withdrawing of it, if thou half it. Oh take heed they of finning against Christ. There are many ways by which a Soul may fin against Christ, and cause this withholding or withdrawings I shall mention two or three to which the Soul in this day will and it felf most apt.

The First is Marmering, and impatience against God, a Sin to which any state of milesy, and advertity doth offer the Soul a Temptation; and a grievous fin against God. How often did the Jense fall into it, as they were traveling to Canan? To hard

2. Use.

The only relief of a Love fick Real to be and from the

a thing it is for us to bear evil from the hand of the family feverely did God punishit! Ay I cran in hande his Servent isa great Soversign, and expects that living men Annie plain, men for the punishment of their iniquity. He expactent a fubmillion unto his will, without opening our mouths sgainft the God of heavens and the murmuring. Soul never gers any thing as the hand of God. One end of Gods afflicting his people, is to tame their Spirits into a fubmillion to his will. Louin to acknowlede Gods Righteousness, and to submit to his will under his (most unpleasing) dispensations at mid die alles

2. Untbank fallness is another fin that provokes Christ under fuch dispensations : We are too too much like Children that because they cannot have what they would have tetchily throw away all they have. I find it noted by Bernend helt, and by many Interpreters fince his time, That'in this Text the Spoule theweth her thank fulnels to Christ, for his left band under ber bead before the felt the embracings of bis right band: the faith, His left band was under me : for the other, the only faith, bu right band thall embrace Ingratitudo (faith Bernard) eft ventus weens, ficeans fibi fontem . pietatis rorem mifericordia, fluenta gamie, i.e. Umbankfulnefi is a drying wind, that dries up the fountain of Holines, the dewe . of Mercy, the flowings of Grace | Even whiles thou wanted those influences of Divine Love which thy Soul defireth so forget not the leffer tokens of Love (in thy apprehension) which thou : receivest; fay not, God hath done nothing for thee, or the Christ doth nothing forther, because he doth not presently por his left hand under thee, and with his right hand embrace thee.

A third is, Unbelief and diftruft in God. This is a great fing it is s a difference or denial of the Power or Goodness of God you know how severely God punished this fin in the Nobleman, 2 Kings 7: 24 that would not believe the plenty in Samuia which the Prophet forctold, he was tredden to death the port day And this fin is fo much the greater, by how much the Soul bath more advantages, and more reason to believe, i. to trust in God. Now every gracious Soul hath great reason to believe because every fuch Southeth had fome former experiences of God If therefore thou wouldft have relief from Ghrift in the day of aby Spinisted diffrefr ; take heed of concluding against it by unbalies take beed of faving. The Land will be greeit w. ac more, the mercomittees

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3. We.

Builfireadinefees fuppore and to comfort his people.

of God, both in order to the obtaining of its and also when they have received it.

In order to their obtaining it, prayer is their great work; it is not their only work: They are to read, to hear, to advise with the Ministers of Christ, to look to their walking with God: O but besides all these (I was about to say above all these) Prayer is their work. Prayer is that duty wherein the Soul immediately deals with God; wressless with him, lays hold upon him; and the great work is Gods.

Secondly, If they do at any time receive any fuccour, let them where to pay their homage of thankfulneft. It is Christs left or night hand which hath done it. But this is enough to have spoken to the full Proposition.

Cant. 2. 6.

His left band was under my bead; and his right band imbraces

Have done with the first Proposition which I observed from these words, and proceed to the second, which was this: Christ weady to support, and to comfort the Souls of his people sick with love.

2. Prop.

2. I shewed you the last day, that support and comfort are those two things which are signified to us under these two metaphorical expressions of the less band being under, and the right band imbresing his people. Is say, Christ is ready to support and comfort his support readings imports two things: 1. Ability. 2. Willingness, they are both signified in the Text.

First his Ability, he hath a left band, and he hath a right band; as he who hath both his hands is able to hold anothers head, or to imbrace another, so Christ is able to support and comfort his people. I say there is no trouble, no distress so great, but Christ is able

to velleve his Servants Souls under it.

2. It imports willing nefs; the had no fooner or ped out to the

Watchmen, and to the daughters of Hierafolem faying flay me with Flaggous and Comfort me with Apples, but her beloved comes in to her relief and the thankfully acknowledgeth, that his left band was under bot and ble right band did support ber. It is a point of exceeding sweetness unto troubled Souls, I will therefore enlarge my self a little in the proof it, especially considering its tendency to advance the riches of my masters grace. I will first prove to you That be is able. 2. That he is willing and at band.

1. That he is able. To prove this let us confider two things:

1. The Souls Exigency. 2: The Spiritual Physicians capacity.

1. The Souls exigency; what alleth this Spiritual patient? it is Sick, Sick how? or of what? it is fick of Love, mentally Sick; what is this to be fick of Love? it is to be firaitned with defines after Christ that are unsatisfied. Thus the most of those Souls, that may be said to be fick of Love may be ranked under these sources.

heads.

1. The Soul sensible of its Sins, their number, their aggravations, their guilt, and not sensible of the pardon of them, but fearing the condemning power of them, and defining to be freed from it, it Sick of Love. It hath apprehended an infinite excellency in Christ, that he, and he alone is able to remove the guilt of Sin from it, it seeth, that by Sin it is ruined, and undone, that if its Sin remains upon it, Heaven and Earth can do it no good; it desires the sense of the pardon of its Sin, but it walks in the dark and freth no light; and nothing now can do the Soul good, but either, 1. The Seal of pardon; or else some secret influence of Grace, inabling the Soul to hope in God for pardon to cast itself upon him, and to wait for him.

Secondly, The Soul possessed of the excellency of grace, and therefore infinitely desiring the inhering and growth of it, within it self, but not finding it is sick of Love; such Souls there are and those not a few in the world of that little number, that attend Spiritual concernments. They are (I say) possessed of the excellency of Grace, and therefore infinitely desire to find in their own Souls, the inbeing and truth of it, and also the increase and growth of it, as that which is their strength and life, and from the due exercise of which they fetch the most of their spiritual Comfort, &c. and now not being able to find any certain notes of the truth of it, nor any evidence of the increase, and growth of it, they are sick of Love: the Symptomes of this Sickness, are their sorrows and sighings, that

they find their hearts in no better frame, that they find so little of the love and fear of God within them, or, their fears that they

hall one day fall away, on

3. The Soul wearied with Satans Temptations, and not finding the strength of Christ within it impowering it to the resistance of them, (which it importunately desires to find) becomes again sick of Love. The gracious Soul, looks upon Sin as the greatest and truest evil in the world: Hence it cannot but look upon all temptations: which are strong, and importunate motions and sollicitations to Sin as the greatest burthens in the World, and from which it desireth rather to be freed, than from any outward Evils: now when it finds a want of this strength to resist these motions, it becomes again sick of Love.

The fourth and last, when the Soul apprehendeth the want of Gods presence with it, it justly looks at the presence of God with it as the greatest good, which it is in this life capable of, the gradual manifestations of which it is very possible that a Soul may want, and it is impossible, that a gracious Soul should not carnestly defire them: now when the Lord is pleased, for some wise ends, to withhold these manifestations, and straiten the Soul as to its Satisfaction in this thing; as slope deserred, so the satisfaction of the Souls desires deserred make the heart fick of Love. These are the Souls

feveral kinds of Love-sickness.

2. Now if in the second place we consider the capacity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we shall find him able to relieve the Soul under all these distempers. There are three things if you observed the Souls distempers well, that will certainly under them relieve and cure it. 1. Sense of pardon. 2. Increase of Grace. 3. Inward strength and supportation against all its Spiritual enemies, and under its sad burthens & distemperature. To prove that there is in Jesus Christ an ability to dispense out all these, I shall need do no more than tell you that he is God. 2. That be is God-man, and hath suffered for us. 3. That be is ascended and sitteth on the right hand of God. 3 Great Articles of a Christian faith.

1. If ay he is God, God over all bleffed for ever. This notion of our Saviour speaketh two things 1 1. That be is omniscient.

2 That be is Omniporent, surright it is to float ent tigrat

r. He is Omnifiten and knows all the cases of all his people, all that happens to them or can happen to them; there is not an aking head nor heart amongst them, but is known to the Lord Jesus.

Christ.

Christ, with the particular cause of its grief, forrow or wound.

Secondly as mighty in power as in knowledg, able to do whatsoever he pleaseth: But yet this is not enough, for God is not able to do any thing, which is contrary to justice: we must therefore

consider the Lord Jesus: Secondly,

2. As God and Man in one person, as the Messias and Saviour, that notion of Christ fignifieth to us, 1. That he swas a person 4nointed and Separated of God, So the term Meffish, and the term Christ signify. 2. That he did the work to which he was appointed: In God there was from all eternity a fulness of Grace; now it pleased the father that in Christ all fulness should dwell. The evangelist tells us the reason . That of bis fulnels we might receive Grace for Grace; he was appointed by God, anointed, fet apart by him for what? for the work of our Redemption; for the accomplishing of it in the whole, and in every part. To pay a price to his fathers justice, a price for what? for all Grace any way necessary, or advantageous for the Souls of his people. And Secondly, he did pay this price; otherwise he had been no actual sesus, no actual Saviour. All power was given to him in Heaven and Earth. A power over all flesh that be might give out eternal life to those given him of his Father. Add to this that the Apostle in the second Chapter to the Hebrews doth prove that our Saviour Christ, therefore took upon him our nature, that in it experiencing the miseries to which our nature was subjected, and our infirmities, he might be more able to fuccour us.

3. He is not only God and our Redeemer, but he is risen and stateth on the right hand of God. The Apostle tells you of a vertue in Christs Reservedion; That ascending up on high, he gave gifts unto men; That he being with the father we have an advecate with the father, even Christ the Righteom, by his being appointed our Messache was commissioned for the work of our Rederaption, for the obtaining of all Grace for his people; by his suffering and dying he made the actual purchase; by his ascending up on high, and sitting down on the right hand of God, he evidenceth himself in a capacity to deal out all this Grace to the Souls of his people; doth the Soul then want sense of pardon? he hath purchased pardon for it, he is able to apply pardon to it, and to signify it by the witness of his Spirit. Doth it complain for want of the increase of Grace or that is not able to discern in itself a truth of Grace? he therefore came that his people might live, and that their life might dipund.

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and he is able to make all Grace abound in them. Doth it want firength to support and assist it? he hath an emnipotent arm, a fulness of all Grace, he hath you see both a right hand and a left hand: But I added that as he is able, so he is also willing.

That's the second thing I have to prove, The willingness of Christ to comfort the Soul that is sick of Love; to comfort and to threngthen it. This is now that which Christians under their Spiritual differences seem most to doubt of, but I shall evince it to you upon

three confiderations.

The first is that certain willinguels which is in Christ, to answer all shofe defires of bis peoples Souls which are for his fathers Glory, and according to bis will. God loves himself necessarily, and cannot but will those things that are for his Glorysfuch now are the Souls increase of Grace strength to relist its Temptations, Corruptions, &c. these things being of immediate tendency to the Glory of God, the Lord cannot but will them to his people, and be ready to answer the fincere defires of those Souls that truly thirst after them: And as these things are for Gods Glory, so they are defires according to Gods will; you know the latitude of the Promise for granting whatfoever we shall ask according to the will of God, now the refistance of Temptations, the growth, and increase of Grace, &c. are things most certainly consonant to the will of God, who hath bid us put on the whole Armour of God, refift, fland fast, &c. and commanded us to grow in grace and in the knowledg of Christ: hence it is not reasonable for any Soul to conclude otherwise, but that there must be a willingness in Christ to relieve his people in these distempers.

2. But it may yet appear further to you, if you, confider the tender care that Christ taketh, not only for the Salvation but for the confolations of his people, not only for the bare necessaries but son the accommodations of their spiritual list he tells us, John 10. 10. That he came not only that his people might live, but that their list might abound; in the accomplishment of our Redemption he had not only respect to the Salvation and life of his people, but also to the aboundings of their list, So Joh. 19.1. when he saw that his Disciples were troubled, mark how tenderly he speaketh to them, Let not your bears be troubled, you believe in God, believe also in me; observe how he declares himself, Mat. 11.29. Come unto me all you that are meary, and beavy-laden, and I will ease you. I might here, heap up a multitude of promises both in the Old, and New Testa-

ment

ment by which God hath secured unto his people, his willinguess and readiness to support, to strengthen, uphold, and comfort his people; his declaring his Commission, Luke 4.18. to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, to set at liberty those that are brussed, &c. his giving us his Scriptures, Rom. 15.6. that we through them might have hope and comfort; his appointing his Prophets of old, his Apostles and Ministers under the New Testament, and his Ordinances to be dispensed by them, for the strength and comfort of his people. But this is enough.

2. Let me argue (laftly) from that natural goodness and senderness that is in Christ, set out in Scripture by several similitudes and feveral expressions, Lam. 3. 32, 33. Though be cause grief, yet will he have compaffion, according to the multitude of his mercies : For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men, to crush under bis feet all the Prisoners of the Earth. His Love is fet out like the love of Fathers which commands compassion for children in misery; Like, yea above the love of Mothers; who may forget their fucking children. In Wisdom indeed and in Justice too he afflicts Ephraim, but no sooner doth Ephraim bemoan her self, but faith he, Fer. 31. 18. Ibave furely beard Ephraim bemoaning ber felf &c. ver. 20. Is Ephraim my dear Son? is he a pleasant child? for fince I Spake against bim, I remember bim still, therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him (faith the Lord.) These and many other Texts evince in the Lord Jesus Christ, a: great Tendernels towards his people that he is not patient of their griefs and troubles, &c. but finds an inclination in his will to relieve them, proportionable to those bowels, and vernings of bowels which are in Fathers and Mothers, and nearest Relations toward those that are their nearest Relations. Now whoso coufidereth this love-fickness of the gracious soul, to be a great grievance, trouble and affliction to it, cannot but upon this consideration conclude the point in hand, viz. a great willingness and readiness in Christ to relieve it. I have said enough I think from Scripture and Reason, to evince the truth of the Proposition: But

4. I hear fome mourning fouls fay, There is no disputing against experience for either this willingness is in Christ towards all his Saints; or only towards some more special savoncites of Heaven: if only towards some how shall I know that I am one of them? if towards all, why am I thus? why do I walk beavily all the day-long, and carry

my burthen about with me from day to day? and with David. Pfal, 22. 2. cry in the day-time, and he heareth not, and in the night fea-

fon I am not filent, but have no anfwer ?

Sol. I answer, That as there is no disputing against experience, so there is no concluding from a particular experience against the unchangeable nature, and most infallible revealed will of God: there may be mistakes as to thy experience; but this must be the nature of a gracious God, and the holy Scriptures are most certainly his revealed Will. I observe, when David complained so saddy, Pfalm 22. v. 1,2,3. he on the sourth verse, recollects himself, But thou art boly, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel; Let us therefore consider where this mistake is.

1. Possibly; then art mistaken in the Nature of thy Disease, and art not indeed sick of love: As all diseases or distempers of the mind are not from spiritual causes; so neither are those which are from

spiritual causes always true love-fickneffes.

1. Many are troubled in their mind, and possibly (good people too) and yet it is not a love fickness; it may be their minds are troubled from fome natural cause, the influence of some vapours will much diffurb the mind oft-times; fometimes the cause is worldly fome cross providences that have befell them, or their Relations, no wonder if while their head akes upon the latter account, Christ doth not put his left-hand under it. This is a sinful trouble in a Christian which worketh unto death : Nay, give me leave to tell you, that a pure Love-fickness is a rare thing, there is such a thing, but I say it is very rare. Nay it is very possible, that the Soul may be fick upon a spiritual account, and yet not love-fick; It is one thing for a man to be fick that he cannot have the Woman (which is the true Love-sickness,) another thing to be sick that he cannot have the Portion : fo it is one thing for the Woman to be fick that the cannot enjoy such an Husband, (that's true Love-sickness;) another thing to be fick that the must yet live in a servile-manner in her Fathers house, and not be as a Lady, &c. It is possible, that a Soul may not so much defire the presence and enjoyment of Christ for his own worth and excelfency, as for the quiet and peace, and fatisfaction it should have to it felf, if it had the fense of the pardon of fins, &c.

Secondly, It is as possible, that thou maist be mistaken in thy apprehensions, That Christs left hand may be under thee, and thou not aware of it. Christ was in the midst of his Disciples, and they

were not aware of him, they knew him not after his Resurrection: it may be thou dost not see his right-hand embracing thee, thou hast not the fignal tokens of his favour, in the sensible manifestations of his Love: but is not his less-hand under thee? does thou not find him by a mighty power supporting, and upholding thee under thy trial? I observed to you before, that there are some, and those worthy Interpreters, that so read this Text; His less-hand was under me, and his right hand shall embrace me. If thou sindess that Christs less-hand is under thee, thou oughtest to be thankful for that, and by faith to conclude the other, that his right-hand shall embrace thee.

Thirdly, though I told you that Christ is ready to put his lesthand under the aking heads of his people, yet it must be according to his infinite Wisdom, directing him the time, the manner, the measure: If Christ will have thy head ake a little, to humble thee for some pass-sin, or to try thy graces at present; if he will but lend thee just so much strength with his lest-hand, as to keep thee from despair; if he will keep further proportions of strength from thee, for some more convenient time when he knows, they will be more suitable and acceptable, acknowledge in this thy Saviours.

wisdom, but do not thou for it reproach his goodness.

4. Lassly, Christ is ready to put his lest-hand under his peoples bead, but this must be supposed in such a way and method as be bath prescribed, viz. in the use of his Ordinances, the Word, Sacraments and Prayers, meditation of the Scriptures, conferring with those who are the guides of thy Soul; now if thou neglectes the use of these means, if thou restrainest Prayer from the Almighty, if thou beest teachy and angry presently with God, because thou canst not have what thou wouldest, it is no wonder if thy passions and corruptions lie in the way of thy own mercy; but these things considered, the Proposition yet remains true.

In the first place, observe from hence the great difference be-Use 1. twixt a Sinner and a Saint; I mean betwixt a graceless, Christless Soul, and one that hath an interest in, and a relation unto the Lord Jesus Christ. The wicked man is subject to mind Sickness, as well as the child of God: Saul and Judas were both of them sick enough; indeed it was not a Love-sickness, Saul was sick of discontent, so was Judas; Christ put his lest hand under neither of their heads; he suffers the one to fall on his Sword, the other to strangle himself: but now, if Ephraim be heard bemoaning her

felf, Gods bowels yern, he faith, is Ephraim my dear Child? Let me tell you, this is one of the great disadvantages which a natural unregenerate man is at, he can hold up his head in a day of prosperity; and when all things go on his side, Gods ordinary influence of Providence is then enough to help him; but he cannot hold up his head in an evil day, because then nothing will help him but Christs lest-hand under him. This now Christ affords unto his Spruse, but he affords not to the wicked and ungodly in the world. Oh that you who forget God would think of this, what you will do in an evil day, when the terrours of the Lord shall surprize you! God will in that day put a difference betwist those that have an interest in Christ, and those that have none. Cain cries out, My punishment is greater than I can bear, or, my sin is greater than that it can be forgiven me. David saith, when I said my foot slippeth, thy mercy O Lord held me up.

In the second place, what an engagement should this lay upon all reasonable Souls, to look for an Union with Christ, an Union by faith; this makes the Soul the Spouse of Christ, this entituleth the Soul to the appeldings of his less band in an evil day. The great arguments to perswade this, are two: 1. The subjection of every Soul to Soul-troubles of one nature or other. 2. The greatness and insupportableness of them without the assistance of the Lords everlasting arm. A wounded spirit who can bear? But thirdly

and more properly,

This calleth to the Children of God, labouring under their Love-fickness for Faith and Patience, and Prayer. 1. For Faith, that they would believe that God hath not forsaken them, their God hath not forgotten them, and therefore it is contrary, very contrary to their Duty to repine and marmur, to despond, or despair: it calls to them to say with David unto their Souls under their disquietments: why are thou cast down, O my soul! why are thou disquieted within me! trust still in God, for I shall yet praise him; they have now heard that Christ is ready to put his letterand under them: Oh! that they would believe it, and not accuse the God of Love of unkindness!

2. For Patience, sceing Christ is able, and willing to relieve his people, there is nothing but his Wisdom that can retard help from their Souls; now certainly there is all the reason in the world, that a poor Soul should judg God wifer than it, and best to know what is good for us; and this should silence our Spirits under all our troubles,

3. Lastly,

Use 2.

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3. Lastly, It calls to you for prayer; Christ is ready to come in to the relief of his people, but he seldom comes till he be called he is found of those that seek him in the way of his Ordinances; you therefore that would have his lest-band under you, stand concerned toread and hear his word, to pray unto him, to wait upon him in all his appointments wherein and whereby he hath said that he will meet and bless his peoples Souls.

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a wording almost is indeed the ground price in the epocial was

His left hand was under my head, and his right hand doth [or shall] embrace me.

Have done with the two first Propositions, which I observed from these words. The first concerning the fole help, and relief for a Soul which is fick of Love; it is in Christs left and right band. The second concerning Christs readiness to lend bis belp. I come now (having confidered the matter of these words) more firicily to confider the form of them; As to which I observed to you a different reading. The want of a Verb (in the Heb.) hath given occasion to a latitude which interpreters have taken in the Explication for in the Heb. the words runs thus. His left band under my bead, and his right-band shall imbrace me. Hence some have interpreted them as a prayer, viz. Let bis left-band be under my head; and let his right-hand imbrace me. Some (as our translation) in the form of an offertion. The latter I have chosen to follow. But there again Interpreters differ in their notion fome read both in the prefent tenfe, bis left-band is under my bead , his righthand doth imbrace me. Then the whole Text fpeaks her thankful acknowledgment of the goodness of Christ to her; some again read the first branch in the present tense. His left-band is under me, and the latter branch (as indeed it is in the Hebrew) in the future. his right hand hall imbrace megand fo as the former part of the Text is an acknowledgment of the Churches thankfulness and gratitude. fo the latter is a reftimony of her faith : yet further, first the faith. bis left-band is under me; then the faith, bis right-band shall imbrace me, and fo concludeth the latter from the former. There are

two Propositions yet remaining, which I mentioned before, and shall now handle fomething more largely. The first is this.

The least manifestations of special distinguishing Grace, are certain pledges of our receiving the fuller and more glorious manifestations of it. The second is this.

4 Prop.

3. Prop.

That a gracious Soul will be thankful, for the lesser manifestations of divine Love, &c. from the receit of them will conclude, that it shall receive the greater and higher manifestations of it. Of these two in their orders the first is indeed the ground of the latter, especially as to the latter clause of it.

3. Prop. The least manifestations of special distinguishing Grace, are certain pledges of the fuller manifestations of it. From hence she concludeth, that his right-hand should imbrace her, because his lest-hand was under her. I put in those terms special distinguishing

Grace, for these two reasons.

1. Because otherwise the Proposition is not true; it is not true concerning common and special Graces a man may receive much common Grace, and yet be far from any special distinguishing Graces He may receive some common-grace, and yet not be able to conclude that he shall receive the suffer degrees of Common-grace.

Secondly, Because I think the phrase in the Text leadeth me to this Notion of Grace; his left band under me. The holding up of the aking head with our hand, is not a common token of Love, especially from persons of Quality; the husband will do it for his wife, and the Parent for the Child, and the familiar friend for his intimate; but we will not do it for every one. So that I fay it feems to fignify special and distinguishing Grace. Look as it is amongft men; a eivil good-man will bave a respect for all men and do ordinary kindnesses for any, but yet he may have some special affection for some persons, his relations or intimate. God as he hath a general love for all men, which sheweth it self in fome acts of gracious Providence; he maketh his Sun to fine, and his rain to fall upon the just and unjust; yea, and so he distributeth fome things that are wromarind, fpiritual gifts, even to wicked men; fo he hath a more particular special Love for some, which he manifesteth in distinguishing acis. Thus, Titus 1. 1. you read of the faith of Gods elect; of fome that he hath predestinated called justified. and whom he will Glorifie. Now these difpensations of special diflinguishing Grace, as they are various, Infification, Effectual calling, Regeneration, Stinitual frength, quickening, confolation, &c.

&c. So they have degrees of excellency and goodness; whe ther you measure the notion of good by profit or pleasure. We call that good which is profitable for us, and brings us some eminent advantage. Thus the grace of Justification, is the most excellent grace because it puts us into the state of reconciliation to God, and by it we are actually at peace with God and reconciled to him; fo the Grace of Regeneration, by which our beart is renewed, and we are disposed to keep the law of God: and now in comparison of these, sensible manifestations are lesser dispensations; for though they are iweet and comfortable, yet the Salvation of the Soul doth not depend upon them, 2. If we measure goodness by pleasure and sweetness, there are also degrees of divine manifestations, even such as are distinguishing too; some are more, some less sweet: The left-hand under ourhead is sweet, but the right-hand imbracing speaks more sweetness, more Comfort, &c. By this now you underfrand the true Notion of special and diffinguishing Love; and how it differs from those common favours which God sheweth unto all people, or to any of his creatures; as likewife in what fence, any degrees of it may be faid to be greater or leffer. Now I fay, the least manifestation of special distinguishing Love is a certain pledz, &c. that which really is the least, for there are Crums that fall from our Masters table; such as really are crums, compared with the greater Loaves: Such as we judg the leaft, you may take it in. either fense, it is true only observing one diffinction.

That is betwixt such dispensations of distinguishing Love, as are Dist. necessary to the Salvation of the Sand, and such as though they speak diffinguishing Love, and are exceeding advantageous, and sweet and comfortable to the Soul; but are not absolutely necessary to the Salvation of the Soul, fich as are now fenfible manifestations of Gods Love comforting and refreshing the Souls of them that fear God. These now God dispenset or withholdeth according to his own infinite wisdom directing him to do what is best for the good of his people; and accordingly we must conclude to the receit of them, upon supposal that God feeth them good for us: I observe in that golden Chain, Rom. 8.29. he doth not fay thus, Whom he did predestinate them he also called, and whom be hath called, them be atfo juftified, and whom he justified them he also comforted, but whom he also justified, them he also glorified. The Apostle only instanceth, in those acts of Grace which are necessary unto the happiness of the Soul (comprehending Regeneration and Sanctification under

the general notion of Calling) fo that now you have the fense of

the point in these two Propositions.

1. The receit of the least manifestations of special distinguishing Love, are certain pledges of our receiving the greater manifestations of it, which are any way necessary unto our eternal Salvation.

- 2. The receit of the least manifestations of special distinguishing. Love from Christ are certain pledges that we shall receive what seem to us greater, though not absolutely necessary to our Salvation, yet if it be any way advantageous, if God who is infinitely wise seeth, that those dispensations will be good for us. These are the Limitations of the Proposition for the clearer understanding of it. I come now to the Reason and proof of it; now the Reason of it lies here.
- 1. Because the special love of God, willeth unto those Souls who are the objects of it, the greatest good, viz. the enjoyment of God in Glory : and willing this, cannot but will those dispensations which are necessary to the obtaining of it. The greatest good which God can will to any Soul is the enjoyment of himself to eternity; this he hath willed them. Fear not little flock, it is your Fathers will to give you a Kingdom. Now God having willed this to them as their highest good and ultimate end; he cannot but will them, whatfoever is either from nature or from his own institution necessary in order to this end; and the receit of the least tokens of this Love, must needs be a pledg of receiving the greater manifestations of it; because the receit of these speaks the Soul, the object of this special and distinguishing love of God; and there needeth no more to the Soul than to know that it is an object of this Love: For it is of the nature of it to will effectually, to will the Soul the greatest good, and fo confequently all things necessary to the obtaining of that; and there is a necessary concatenation of all those acts of special grace. which are (as means) necessary in order to the great and highest endihence you read in Scripture, Epb. 1.14. of the earnest of our Inberitance; and of the earnest of the Spirit, 2 Cor. 1.22.chap. 5. 9. and of the first fruits of the Spirit, Rom. 8.23. Look as the first fruits are the natural pledg of the harvest, and the earnest is the moral pledg of the fulfilling of the bargain; so the receiving of any tokens of special distinguishing Love, is a most certain pledg of the further. and more full discoveries, and manifestations of it unto our Souls. The least token of special Love, speaketh us to be Christs, to have a share and interest in bim, a near relation unto him, 1 Cor. 4, 22.2. All.

All are yours, things prefent, things to come; all is yours, and you are Christs, and Christ is Gods. In him all the Promises are yes and Amen. He that hath a right to one spiritual Promise, hath a right to all the Promises: for the Souls right to any one Promise floweth from its justified state, from its interest in Christ. The Use of this Point shall be short.

1. It speaketh infinite Confolution to those poor Souls that canbut find the least dispensation of special distinguishing Love to their Souls. The fouls of the Saints are exceeding the of thirty maters of life, very greedy of some Tokens of special and distinguishing Love, and not satisfied with ordinary Dispensations, and very ready to suspect themselves as to their spiritual and eternal Estate, if they have not the fuller confirmation, and greatest affurances of divine Love unto their Souls. Now I fay to fuch jealous Souls, what can be of more comfort than this Proposition which I have handled; if God hath given thee the Earnest, he will doubtless make good the bargain; if be bath given thee the first-fruits, thou maift be confident of the Harvest. So that all which thou needest to do is to examine thy heart strictly, whether thou canst find that God bath done any thing for thy Soul in a way of special love? If thou canst but find that God hath dropped but one drop of dew, spiritual dew upon thy Soul, that the Sun of Righteonfness hath caft but one beam of true light upon thy Soul; that thy Soul hath but made one truly spiritual motion, it ought to flay and comfort, although not fatisfie thee. Christ owneth the bruised Reed and the Smooking Flax, fo far as that he will not quench it, Matth. 25. To him that bath shall be given. The least drop of dew is water as well as the whole body of Water that is in the Ocean, and the least Ray is light; and the least true motion argues life, and the least Dispensation of special distinguishing grace argues the special love of God, and a state of grace. But it may be some will say, how shall I know this, I fear whether I have any thing of special grace yea or no? Let me but propound three or four questions to thee thus doubting.

Doff thou not find in thy Soul, a deep sense of thy own vile- 1. Quest. ness and unworthiness? though thou hast not a whole heart rejoycing in the fense, affurance, and full evidence of divine Love, yet dost thou not find in thy self a broken heart? who hath taken away thy heart of flone, and given to thee an heart of flesh? Is not this the Lords work? Man is naturally proud, and hard-hear-

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ted, and feeth no need of Christ, who hath given thee another foirit, and changed thy nature? no man truly dead is fensible of it.

and fays, Now I am dead.

Doeft thou not find fome breathings of love after Christ? wouldft not thou give all that thou haft in the world that God would whilper to thy Soul, that he is thine, and thou art his? Doeft thou not defire the enjoyment of God with an earnest and passionate defire, as the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks? who hath kindled his boly fire in thy foul? who hath given thee to will? although thou haft possibly no strength to perform, is not this a token of Special love to thee ? did ever any natural, carnal man defire a conformity to Christ, or a Communion with Christ above all things in the world besides?

At this very time of thy complaint, Doeft thou not truly adhere to, and depend upon the Lord Tefus Christ for life and Salvation ; and for the further manifestations of his love to thy Soul? Indeed this is hard to discern, but every Soul that hath but the least of grace doth it although he doth not fee that it doth fo : I would but fay to fuch a Soul thus, Thou thinkest now that thou hast nothing of Chriff, no share, no interest in him: what wouldst thou take now for thy Reversion of Christ, for all the good thou hast or maist have by Christ? I know thou wouldest not take all the world for it; does not this speak that thy Soul hath a dependance upon him, fome little hope and confidence in him? (how weak: and how much affaulted with temptations, doubts, fears, &c. fo ever it be.)

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Lastly, Didst thou never find some supportings of grace, some upholdings, and bearings up under great afflictions, and great temptations, which thy Soul is forced to confess could be from no other but from an everlafting arm? though thou hast not found his righthand embracing thee under Affictions and Temptations; yet half thou not found his left-hand upholding thee? Haft thou never found cause to say, I had perished in my affliction, if thy Word bad not been my delight? If the Lord had not been on my fide, my foul had fank under this or that temptation, &c. Now if thou canft but find any fuch-like certain tokens of special diffinguishing love, thou maift conclude them the first-fruits of a greater Harvelt, the Earnest of a greater Bargain, as the Spouse in my Text doth; and that doth bring me to the fourth Prop.

It is the duty of a gracious Soul, thankfully to acknowledg the leaft

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receits of distinguishing grace, and from them (by faith) to conclude to the greater manifestations of it. This Proposition mentions two things as the Duty of the child of God, upon the receit of the least Dispensations of distinguishing Grace.

1. The first is Thankfulnefr. The Spoule publisheth it; His

left-band is under me.

2. The second is Faith, concluding from the receit of the leffer at the present to the receit of the greater in future time. Both these (I say), are the Duty of the child of God upon the receit of the

least manifestations of distinguishing Love.

1. The first is thankfulness; A Duty much called for in Scripture, due unto God at all times, and for all things, Ephef. 5, 20. Indeed it is a natural Duty; the law of Nature calleth to us for it. The very Heathens could fay, Ingratum fi dixeris omnia dixeris; call a man an unthankful man, and call him any thing. Bernard makes this to be a great piece of the sense of the Text, Difee in referendo gratias non effe tardus aut fegnis; difce ad fingula dona gratias agere; Learn (faith he) to give thanks prefently, learn for all the gifts of God to give thanks; Let none of Gods gifts lose this tribute of praise, non grandis, non mediocris, non pufilla, neither his great gifts, nor his least gifts, nor his midling gifts. The Disciples, faith he, were bid to gather up the fragments that they should not perish. That goodness of God perisheth, which is collated or bestowed upon an unthankful person. Ingratitudo (faith he) inimica eft anime exinanitio meritorum, virtutum dispersio, beneficierum perditio. You see there is reason enough why a Soul should be thankful for the receit of the least token of diffinguishing Love and Goodness. The law of Nature requireth it, the law of God requireth it. The contrary argueth a difingenuous Soul. But I will add yet another.

Because there can be no token of divine love so little, but in far above Reas.

our deserts, yea quite contrary to our deserts; what holy Jacob Gen. 32. 10. said we must all say, I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies:

he spake it there as you may see concerning outward, temporal mercies, God had blessed him with a great encrease, it is much more true of spiritual distinguishing Love: Let the tokens of it be never so little comparatively to others, never so mean; yet they are far above the greatest of our deserts. This is the reason of the Point.

But you will fay, wherein doth this thankfulness lie ? Thankful-

nels is matter of Action, and relates to the beart, the songue, the whole man : fo far as it respecteth the heart, it lieth in the 1. Agnition, or acknowledgment of the mercy as coming from God. 2. The Meditation and admiration of his goodness for it. The heart of a man is truly thankful for a mercy, when it owneth it to be received from God, and secretly meditates of & admireth the goodness of God in it, judgeth itself chliged to God for it, and studies what it should render to the Lord; this is the inward thankfulness of the heart. The thankfulnels of the lips lieth in the repeating of the mercy telling of Gods wondrous works, as David; Come (faith he) I will tell you what the Lord bath done for my foul; as the Spoule here. His left-hand is under me. 2. In speaking well of bis Name. predicating his glorious Attributes, his mercy goodness, truth, upon this occasion, of which you have many instances, both in the fong of Mofes, and of Deborah; and in the Pfalmift in many Pfalms. The thankfulness of the Conversation lieth in the directing of the whole Body and Soul to the glory of God. This is now the Duty of the child of God upon the receit of the least Dispensation of distinguishing Love: but this is but the first part. The second follows, viz. The exercise of faith concluding to the Receit of further and greater manifestations of divine goodnels from the receit of former; This I say is the Christians Duty. The Logicians tell us, that the rule of Reason guideth us in comparate arguments to argue a majori ad minus affirmando, a minori ad majus negando, from the greater to the less by affirming; thus the Apostle argues. If God bath given us Chrift, bow (hall be not with bim also give us all things? Christ is the greater bleffing. Thus our Saviour argues, that God will provide for us meat and drink, because be cloatbeth the grafs and feedeth the Ravens. It is a greater act of divine condescenfion and Love, for God to take care of Grass, and Lillies and Ravens, than of his elect rational Creatures, and because he provivideth for the Body, &c. he will take care for Raiment, &c. But as Logicians note, we may argue from the leffer to the greater in many cases affirmatively, I intend not to dispute that question at large: It is certainly a good argumentation, as to the fe acts which we'do from a root of intense and fervent love, supposing all circumstances equal: as now amongst men, it is a rational conclusion for a child to conclude thus, If my Father will give me money to frend, be will furely give me bread to eat, and cloatbs to ford, because the love of the Father must necessarily constrain him more to serve his child with necessaries than with superfluities.

2. It is certainly true where the things which are lesser, are but pledges of greater, or necessary means in order to the greater. All to-kens of divine Love which we receive here, are but the earnest of a far greater and more glorious inheritance, they are likewise as means in order to it. As therefore a man may conclude thus; here is the first-fruits, therefore I shall have an Harvest, or I have earnest, therefore I shall have the bargain sulfilled: So a Christian may conclude thus, I have the earnest of grace, therefore I shall have

fuller measure of it.

2. But yet in the present case there is also a further strength in it: as both the former and the latter are equal subjects of the divine Promise in the performance of Gods faithfulness in which the Soul receiveth both the one, and the other: So that the Souls conclusion is this, If God bath been faithful in this little thing, then furely be will not be unfaithful in the greater things which my Soul standeth in need of and waiteth for. So that the strength of the gracious Souls argument lies in two things: 1. That the root of its present mercy is nothing but divine Love, free Love, and that same root hath vertue and sap enough in it to send forth more branches. 2. Upon the confideration that the mercy already received is an iffue of divine truth & faithfulness, and that faithfulness stands engaged for all those further performances, in the expectation of which the gracious Soul liveth. Hence you shall find the fervants of God ordinarily thus concluding from, Thou baft, to, Thou wilt. David concluded, I Sam. 17. That because God bad delivered bim from the Lion and the Bear, he would also deliver him from Goliah. Pfalen 3. 7. Arife, O Lord, and fave me, for thon haft smitten all mine enemies on the check-bone. So Pfalm 4. 1. v.8.7. Pfalm 27. 1, 2, 3. Pfalm 56.13. Thou haft delivered my Soul from death, wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling ? 2 Cor. 1.10: who delivered w from fo great a death, and doth deliver, in whom we trust that be will deliver. Indeed, these instances do not exactly prove the Propofition that it is the Duty of Christians, to conclude from the receit of the leffer to the receit of the greater; but they teach us to conclude from the receit of some mercy to the receit of more: and the reasons must be the same before-mentioned, because the fame root of Love will fend forth both, and the fame faithfalness, from which the first was produced, will constrain the production of the latter. I shall conclude with one branch of Application, Calling

To all of you thus to exercise faith: concluding from the receits of some mercy to the receits of further mercy, you hear the grounds for such a Conclusion. The love and faithfulness of God;

only remember two cautions.

t. Take heed of concluding from the receit of semporal to the receit of spiritual mersies: They are mercies of quite different kinds, and God often bestows temporal good things upon those which shall never receive spiritual. Do not conclude, the pardon of sins, the salvation of your Souls, &c. because you have bealth, peace, riches, &c.

2. Take heed of concluding to your selves from the receit of some distinguishing tokens of love to the receiving of others of the same kind, but not so necessary to your salvation, without a submission to Gods will, or an, if God seeth it good for me, I shall have it, &c. I gave you the reason for this before, but conclude certainly as to

the receit of all the necessaries of Salvation, &c.

Cant. 2. 7.

I charge you (O you Daughters of Hierusalem by) the Roes, and by the Hinds of the field; that you stir not up, nor amake my Love till he please.

7 E have feen the Spouse (by which we understand the truly believing Soul) at a feast of Love. The Lord Christ (her beloved) under whose shadow the sate with great delight; ver. 3. brought her into the Banquetting-bouse, and his Banner over ber was Love ; ver. 4. She grew fick of Love ; v. 5. And in the 6th. ver. we found her fatisfied with it. His left-hand was under her head, &c. the goes on yet in the words of my Text, I charge you (O you Daughters of Hierufalem!) by the Roes, and by the Hinds of the field, that you ftir not up, nor awake Love till it please; She is now in possession of her greatest good, and she is. loth to be diffeised of it. A Metaphor (doubtless) drawn from the love of women. The kind wife baving ber Husband returned from some long and tedious Journey, and laid to rest, chargeth the Family to make no noise, but to let bim fleep as long as be will. In this speech of the Spoule are to be considered: 1. To whom the Speaks,

Beaks in those words, O you Daughters of Hierusalem. 2. What the faith, the chargeth them by the Roes, and by the Hinds of the field, that they awake not ber Love till he pleafe. In her speech observe, 1. The matter of it, in those words, That thou ftir not up, nor awake my Love till be pleafe. It is you fee a prohibition of some action : the object of this Act the describeth under the notion of Love. 2. The Action prohibited, is, their flirring up and awakening ber Love. 3. There is the limitation of time, untill be pleafeth. 2. Obferve the form of her fpeech, and that either more generally; It is an adjuration, or more specially an adjuration in or by, the Roes and Hinds of the field. I will open it according to this distribution: beginning first with the persons to whom she speaketh, characterized under the notion of the Daughters of Hierufalem . we met with the term in the former Chapter, ver. 5. I told you there that Hierufalem is an Hebrew word, that it fignifieth the Vision of peace, because God in that City gave his people rest and peace. That it might be considered in its Politick notion, as it was the Metropolis or chief City of Judes : and in that fense the Daughters of Hierusalem were the Fews, all the people amongst whom the Spouse lived. Or 2. It might be considered in an Ecclefiaftical notion fo it often is used to fignifie the Church of God, the whole Nation of the Jews was a Church of God: yea in Hierufalem stood the Temple, there was all the folemn worship of God. Thus it is taken, Pfal. 58.18. Pfal. 102.21. and in other Texts: The Church militant, Zech. 8. 22. Gal. 4. or the Church Trimmphant, called the New Hiernsalem; O you Danghters of Hiernfalem! O all you people amongs whom I live! Or 2. O you that believe in Christ, you that love and fear God, &c. What should they do? That you ftir not up nor awake Love till it please.

By [Love] here Divines think that the person beloved is intended, (the Abstract being put for the Concrete,) so that they make it the same with that, chap. 1. v. 7. O thou whom my Soul loveth! He had called her my Love, chap. 1. v. 9, 15. chap. 2. v. 2. She had called him her Beloved, chap. 1. v. 13, 16. chap. 2 v. 3. here she calleth him in the abstract Love, an usual figure of speaking and only signifying the greatness of his Love, in whom there is a breadth, and length, and height, and depth of Love Eph. 3. 18, 19. we conclude here that by Love is means Christ, in whom are the incomprehensible heighths, [That you stir not up nor awake.] This is the Act which she prohibiteth them, 1707 DV

they are two words in the English, but in the Hebrew they only differ in the form, the root is the fame not fignifying to awake, excite, fir up, which are words which relate to fleep, or reft, and import a disturbance of reft. So that that which the Spoule cautions people against, is, disturbing the quiet of Christ and his Church, or the Rest which Christ bath with the believing Soul, or which the believing Soul hath in Christ, [Until be please, I spoken after the manner of men. When we would not have one disquieted who is at rest, or who is laid to rest, we fav. I charge you do not awaken him until be please. Only one thing I must note, that the particle Until doth not always denote a limitation of time, after which a thing may be which may not be before that time, but by it sometimes a thing is denied Eternally. Thus 2 Sam 6.23. Michal had no more children until the day of her death, i. e. the never had more. Gen. 28. 15. I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have fooken to thee of i.c. I will never leave thee; for fo God hath faid . I will never leave thee nor forsake thee : so here, until be please, i. e. that you never disquiet bim. For the true understanding of this Verse, we must enquire and find out what is the rest, and sleep of Christ, and how he may be faid to be firred up and difquieted, and made to make. (as a man out of fleep) (to which I shall fully speak in opening the Doctrine.) There is yet one passage more to be noted, it is the form of the Speech: [I adjure you by the Roes and the Hinds. of the field if you, &c. I adjure you, I make you to swear. The Hebrew root is, vow Septem, feven , thence the Verb vow to Swear: either because in that solemn act of Swearing the Fews were wont (as some say) to repeat the words of the Oath seven times, or because they were wont to take seven Witnesses : hence (fav fome) when Abraham sware to Abimelech, he set aside seven lambs for a witneft. The word in Scripture is often used to fignifie the act of Smearing. In the third Conjugation (which is that used here) it fignifieth to make to swear; I adjure you, i. e. I make you to freer, or rather, I charge you as firidly, as if you were obliged by an Oath. But the greatest difficulty lies yet behind viz in the underfranding of that term : IN FINAN באילות השרה באילות השרה באילות השרה באילות השרה op. and Arab. Translators follow, in, or by the strength and power of the Fields: We have the same phrase in this Song, Chap. 3. 5. Ghap, 8. 4. It is a certain form of a severe charge, curse, or adjurajuration. Juramentum pastorale, a pastoral or Shepheards Oath, (faith Morcer,) others think otherwise; viz. you daughters of Hiernfalem, that live among the Boes and Hindres the Field. To give you a little taste of the variety of senses put by Interpreters on this Text:

1. Some here understand by the Roes and Hinds of she Field, those beafts firictly that are so called & make a diverse sence from thence: Either, 1. I charge you as strictly, as if you had sworn by the Roes and Hinds of the Field; or thus. 2. you daughters of Hierufalem that live amongst the Roes and the Hinds of the Field; for you know the Ifraelites lived much of a Shepbeards Field-life; or thus, 2. von that live in the Fields, and fee the Roes and the Hinds of the Field. how loving they are, or how fwift they are: The notion of Roes and Hinds in Scripture is used, I. To express frifines, Afabel; and the Servants of David, for this are compared to Roes, 2 Sam. 2. 18. 1 Chron. 12. 8. Thus in this Song the notion is used to fignify the bafte which Christ makes, or which the Spouse would have him make unto her, Cant. 2.9, 17. So chap. 8. 1. 14. Make hafte my beloved, and be thou like to a Roe, or to a young Hart, upon the mountain of Spices. 2. To express agility; in getting out of danger, Prov. 6. 5. deliver thy felf as a Roe from the band of the Hunter. 3. The chaled Roe, is a notion made use of to fet out a miserable forlorn effate, If. 13. 14. It shall be as the chafed Roe, and as the wandring sheep which no man taketh up. 4. To lignify a great thirst and defire, Pfal. 42. v. I. for those creatures ordinarily live in Mountains, where the grass hath little juice, and there is little water to be found. 5. To express great love, either to yoke-fellows, Pro. 5. 19. (speaking of the wife,) Let ber be as a pleasant Hind or as a voung Roe, let ber breafts fatisfie thee; or to our Children, ler. 14.5. for there is observed in those creatures a great Love, both to their mates and to their young ones. Befides this, some Naturalifts obferve a great disposition in these creatures to belp one another, and make them an emblem of that brotherly Love, (which should be amongst Christians,) bearing one anothers burtbens, and fulfilling the Law of Christ. Thus much now we learn from Scripture about the nature, and qualities of these Beasts: Now it is no easy thing to give a just account of all particular phrases in Scripture; each Country hath fome particular phrases, which cannot be interpreted according to the Letter, but must (for the true knowledg. of them) be understood from an acquaintance with the people.

and ulages of the Countrey. So had the Jews, and this was one of them; yet doubtless the reason of it must be taken from some quality of those Beasts. The form of the Spouses speech here, as I said before, is an Adjuration, a severe charge. For that sense which I hinted before, as if by the Roes and by the Hinds were the form of the Oath, cannot be admitted. The Spouse certainly knew, that swearing by a creature was prosume, and supposing such a sinful custome amongst rude people, the holy Ghost knew, that no obligation resulted from such an Oath, and would not have commended any such example. The Roes and Hinds therefore are either here mentioned, I. As wild Beasts amongst whom these Daughters lived: Or, 2. As representing wicked men like wild beasts. So the sense either is; you that live in Mountains and desert places. Or, 2. You that live in the world that is full of wicked and sinful men; as wild and wanton as Roes or Hinds.

Deut. 32. 1. Esay 1. 2. Jer. 8. 7. Or else secondly, they are propounded here as patterns of Love; you that see how full of Love and kindness the Roes and Hinds are. I charge you by the fight of them, who will else rise up in Judgment against you, for their Love too, and fondness of each other. Thus oft-times the Heavens and Earth are oft called to witness against sinners, Dent. 30. 19. Fost. 24. 27.

Or else thirdly, they are propounded as faist ereatures, to intimate (as somethink) the swift Judgment that should come upon these that did thus stir and disquier the Lord Jesus. Their destruction should be as swift; as if it were brought by a Roe, or by

an Hind.

There is yet one sense more. Those that follow it, make the sense yet more broken, and Elliptical, I charge you O you Daughters of Hierusalem by the Roes and by the Hinds, i. e. I charge you that you abide by the Roes, and Hinds of the Field. As the good woman when her Husband is at rest sends her Servants and Children out of doors, and commands them to stay there: So the Spouse speaking in her Countrey-dialect, bids them get them about their business, stay and abide in their callings: I have given you what light I can into this dark and unusual phrase, which (except in this song) occurreth no-where in Scripture, I shall now conclude with Mercer; That we must not think that every passage in an Allegory can be doctrinally improved and applied: It is enough for us to attend to that point, which is chiefly and principally intended, and that out of the whole we draw out what is chiefly intended. I shall do it in this Proposition.

It is the great concernment of every man and woman, to take beed Prop. that they do not diffurb the quiet fleep, and reft which Tefus Christ bath with his Church, or with the particular Soul that believeth in bim.

I shall speak to this by way of Explication, Confirmation, Appliention. By way of Explication to two things: 1. What is Christs rest or sleep. 2. By what acts may it be said to be disturbed.

1. Qu. What is it for Christ to reft or fleep, and fo be in a ca- 1. O. pacity to be stirred up, and awaked? stirring up or awaking relate to a Rest or seeping, and we cannot know how Christ can be stirred up or awaked, till we understand what his resting or sleeping is. In fleep there are two things: " but boog sale galant

1. Coffacion from action or motion; all the fenfes are locke up and

most motions are stopped.

2. Quiet and refreshment. Sleep refresheth, comforteth, and reviveth the body, and recovers the Spirits: Upon both these accounts in a metaphorical borrowed notion, God may be faid to

Acep.

1. When he ceafeth to all fenfibly to the good of his people : Thus. Pfal. 78. 65. The Lord is faid, to awake w, one out of fleep, Pfal. 44, 23. Amske! wby fleepest thou, O Lord! God indeed never fleepeth, no not in a true metaphorical sense; but he is said to fleep. when though indeed he careth for his people, yet this his care is not fenfibly discerned in the actings of his Providence, he doth indeed but feem to fleep. Non deferit etiamfi deferere videatur. (faith Augustine).

Secondly Sleep, and a time of fleep, speaketh quiet and refresh. It is faid of the wicked, Prov. 4. 16. That they fleep not except they have done evil, i. e. they are never quier. In this fecond notion or in referrence to it, I understand this Text. There is a time when Christ may be faid not to sleep; but to be awake, and working to gather his Church, to gain Souls to himself. It is like the Lovers wooing of his Bride; he fleeps not with her, but he waits upon her, wooes, intreats her, &c. fo there is a time when Christ fleeps not with the Church, nor with the Souls of his people; he is awake and working in the gathering and gaining of them: But there is a time when he fleeps with them, having gained them unto an union and communion with him, when Christ lies betwine the breads of the Soul, and the Soul lies in the bo-

fome

fome of Christ; when Christ is not made to rise up from his place, but walks in the midft of the Golden Candlefticks, and dwells in the midft of a gracious Soul and is not disturbed. You have in Scripture two phrases which speak to this purpose; they are both, Zeph, 3. 17. The Lord thy God in the midft of thee is mighty be will fave, be will rejoyce over thee with joy, be will reft in bis Love; be will joy over thee with finging. There is the motion of the Soul, and the motion of the outward man. And there is the rest of the Soul and the rest of the outward man; Christ saith he will rejoice over his people with joy. The Lord is often fet out in Scripture, under the notion of one defiring earnestly and passionately, desiring the good of his people. Here now he is let out not as one with defire defiring, the good and welfare of his people; but as one rejoycing over them with joy: Joy is the rest and satisfaction of the Soul. He will reft in bis Love, Christ is always full of Love to his people, but there is a time, when he refts in bis Love; having obtained his defires and fatisfied himself concerning them so then the time of Christs sleep (implied in the Text) is the time when he enjoyeth his people, in their communion with him quietly and without disturbance.

2. Qu. What is it for to ftir up, and to awake the Lord Jefin

Christ?

From hence it appeareth, that to flir up, and to awake the Lord Christ, is to do any thing, that may either make him desert the Soul, or which may disturb the Churches or the Souls communion with him. Now it being of the nature of every sin to separate between the Soul and God, the Spouse in charging People not to stir up nor awake her Love, may either be understood.

1. In reference to berfelf. That they would do nothing to difturb

ber communion with Christ: Or.

C2. In reference to themselves; from her experience of the wonderful sweetness that her Soul enjoyed in her communion with Christ. She adviseth them, so many of them, as had tasted of the Love of Christ. That they would take heed of any acts, which might any time disturb their fellowship with God, especially that they would take heed of those Sins, which from Scripture or from their experience, they might find to have a special malignity to this sweet enjoyment. I find learned Interpreters hinting both senses. I will therefore speak to both: In the first the Proposition founds thus.

1. That it is marter of great Concernment to all people to take beed of doing any actions, by which they may defturb that freet reft, that excellent Communion which Christ bath with bis people. Our fellowfbip, faith Saint John, Ep. 1, chap. 1.v. 1. is with the Father and the Bon Jefus Chrift. Now to open this, our Communion with God is either meerly Internal in the exercise of inward grace, such as faith, love, &c. Or External, which is in his Ordinances. As to the first; all the men of the world cannot break it, it lieth in the Souls immediate addresses to God, converses with God: it is not to be broken but by our own voluntary act. As to the latter, viz. our external communion with God, it is in his Worthin and Ordinances, which while they keep unpolluted, while they keep close to them. God is faid to walk, to be, to dwell in the midft of them. Christ is at rest and serisfed while his people worship him strictly, and purely in spirit and truth. Now this rest of Christ may be di-

Hurbed two ways :

1. Either first by the persons, and that chiefly, either 1. by their wilful Apostacy, corruption, and debauchery in the things of his worthip, which you shall fee in the whole feries of Scripture continual-It disquieted God. This was it which made him for fake bie taber nacle in Shilob, which made him at last forfake bis Temple at Hierufalem. As the man is not quiet in a bed defiled, but is fill'd Ezek. 9. with jealousie, and disturb'd in his conjugal life. So God was never quiet and at reft with his people, that grew corrupt; and did in his worthip what he commanded them not. Look throughout all Scripture, where ever you find it, you that find God upon the wing from that people and departing from them like a man awaking out of fleep, and finding an Adulterer in his bed, you shall find, that of all the Commandments God chose out the fecond to affix his attribute of jealousic unto, and in all experience you shall find, that nothing hath so disquieted Christs rest in a place, as failers in his worthip; (I hope you understand me falely, when I fpeak of disquieting and disturbing the Lord Jesus; his holy Effence cannot be diffurbed; I speak after the manner of men as my Text speaketh: the meaning is. That he is made to change his methods, and dispensations of love to methods and dispensations of weath. 2. By a Churche's falling into Errours, and a general lo fenels in the practice of Professors, Rev. 2. 4. God that refled in his Love to the Church of Ephefus, ver. 1. He walked be the midft of the golden Gondlefticke, was awaked by the loss of her first

Love, and threatens to come against ber, and to remove ber Candlestick out of its place. These two things are the voluntary actions and miscarriages of a Church, and of a particular Soul, by which

they disquiet Christs rest amongst them.

2. Secondly, Christs Rest with his Church, or with a particular Soul are disturbed by others, fuch as persecutors, &c. 'Thus the learned Beza and others interpret this Text. By fleep in this Text, faith Beza is understood the quiet rest which the Spouse hath with Christ, and Christ with her after it hath taken the spiritual food of his Word and Sacraments. Now (faith he) as men cannot give that peace, so neither can they take it away, Fobn 14.27. but they make and break the Churches more external Communion. and do all that in them lies to disturb it. Therefore by the Daughters of Hierufalem here are understood, qui funt quidem in Ecclefia non funt de Ecelefia, who are in the Church, but not of the Church; as (faith he) at this day the Fews and Turks do not so much difturb the Church of God as those qui se Catholicos immo & Ecelefix columnas effe pradicant; who boaft themselves Catholicks, and the Pellars of the Church. Those then are they from without the Church of God, who fir up and awake this Love; even those, who hinder the Churches external communion with God in the purity of his Worship, and freedom of his Ordinances. Now, this I say is a very dangerous thing; as for any Church voluntarily to diflurb Christs rest in and with them, by any corruption in Worship. Dodrine, Manners: so for any others professing themselves Christians by their rage, fury, and perfecutions, to disturb the Churches outward communion with God in his Ordinances, destroying their liberties, &c.

2. For a particular Soul, as it hath its communion with Christ, so as that he doth sometimes as it were sleep in its bosom. So it may also stir up and anake bim; and that 1. By any course of sin; 2. By some special sins, which provoke God in a more eminent manner to depart from a Soul, and do as it were stir him up and awake him. There are divers such sins, I shall instance in some sew: 1. Spiritual Security, 2. Hardness of beart, 3. Murmuring, 4. Unbelief, 5. Unthankfulness, 6. Corruption, or looseness in his Worship. I shall (God willing) speak to all of these when I come to the Application. Let me in the next place enquire the reason of this Proposition; why is it a matter of so great concernment for men to take heed that they do not disturb the rest of Christ with his

Spoule ?

Scoufe? The only Reason I shall insist upon, is, Fram the evelthat will be confequent of fuch a diffarbance unto thofe that make it.

I. For those that diffurb Christs Communion with bis Church, and the Churches fellowship with Christ by perfecutions, or any interruptions of them in their due order of worthipping God : of all other transgressions certainly one of the most causless, and most unjustifiable ways of finning against God. For suppose a poor wretch will have his own swinge of lusts and corruptions, yet what need he disturb others who defire to walk more close with God; and to keep more exactly to the rule which God hath fer them? yet fuch Instruments of Satan have always been in the world. Christ never had any Church in order, and enjoying sweet quiet, and peace walking together in the Ordinances of the Gospel, but the Devil presently stirred up some Instruments or other to disturb it either by Herefies and falle Doctrine breaking it into parties, or elfe by an open immediate perfecution, and bringing them to fuffer for Conscience and Righteousness-sake : Such were the Pharifees, Matth. 23. 13. They would neither enter into the Kingdom of Heaven themselves, nor suffer those that would. Themselves would not fee that Christ was the true Melfiasi that he had abolished the Ceremonial Law, but would keep to the traditions of their Fathers, and to the Ceremonial Law; nor had they patience to fee the Disciples of Christ steer another course. Such were the lews fo long us they had a being in a Body together, and any form of Government amongst them (as you may read throughout the whole book of the Acts of the Apostles.) Such were after them the Roman Emperours for some hundreds of years, and after them the Papifts. Such were in the Primitive times the Arrians and others, all of them great disturbers of that rest which Christwas enjoying with his purer Primitive Church; such there have been in all times. Now of how great Concernment it had been to these Diffurbers to have been more quiet and not to have awaked nor flirred him up, may in part be judged from Gods teftimony against some of them in this life, besides that further revelation of wrath which some of them have began to taste, and all of them shall further know in that day which the Apostle speaketh of a Theffal, 1.7.8. When the Lord Fefus shall be revealed from Hea- 1 Thef. 2. 16. ven with his mighty Angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance upon them which know not God Oc. The Motto of Judah is Christs Mot- Gen. 12. 8. 9. to: he is a Lion, and as an old Lion, who shall rouse him up? He

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that goes about to rouze up a Lion, attempts a perillous thing with an infinite hazard to himfelf. Those who at any time have gone about to rouze up Christ conched in his Church have done it to their own ruine; Though God hath permitted them to do it. and (in wrath to his people) flirred them up, and fet them on work, yet he hath not suffered them to go unpunished, Efry 10.4. 5. Affria was the Rod of Gods anger and the fiaff of his Indignation, fent by God against Israel as an hypocritical Nation; yet God punished the front beart of the King of Affyria. What became of the Scribes and Pharifees, and the whole Body of the Fems. who were the first diffurbers of the Gospel-Church? Our Saviour. Matth, 23. 37, 38, foretold them what would come, and it did come within 60 years after his Afcenfion : their houses were made defolate, they are this day, the hilling and reproach of all Nations upon the earth. What is become of the Roman Emperours, who next to them were the great disturbers of Christs rest with his Spouse? Those ten perfeentions lasted 330 years after Christ. I think there were not above 44 of those Emperours, and 42 of them are reported to have come to miserable untimely ends: Nero cut his own throat, Dometion was flabbed by his own Servants : Frajan died miferably through difeafes; fo did Hadrian, and Antonius Verus, Commodus was first poisoned, then flain; Severus died of milerable pains; Maximinus flain by his Souldiers; fo was Gallus; Valerian made a Horfe block to Sapores the Perfian; Aurelian had his throat cut by his Servants: Dioclefian fell mad and then killed himself. Maximinian hangs himself; Maximinus was followed with most loathsome diseases, at last the apples of his Eves fell out : Galerius flew himself. Licinius was flain by Souldiers. In Conftantine's time Christ again returned to his reft. and the Church had peace; but immediately arose another Constantine that diffurb'd him and persecuted the Christians, he was flain by one of his Servants. I could give you infinite particular inftances. I could tell you of our own Arch-bithop Arundel and Bishop Gardiner. How short was the time of Queen Mary? The time would fail me, from an induction of particular instances of Gods dreadful Judgments in all Ages following fuch as diffurbed the rest of his Church. That of Mr. Hintehinfon (a few years fince) in New-England is a terrible inflance. In fhort, there have been very few in the world in any time, that ever thus provoked the Lord to jealousie, but it proved to be to their own confusion;

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the Lord hath let them fee that he is stronger than them. Is it not then of very great concernment to people of all forts and all degrees of people to take heed, where they see a people of God walking together in the Ordinances of his Gospel, that Christ is as it were assep, and at rest amongst them, to take heed of stirring of him up, either by Persecution, or by Heresie, dividing and scatte-

ring the flock of Christ.

2. Secondly, I told you also it is of great Concernment to people to take heed of ftirring up, or awaking the Lord Christ's rest in their own Churches, or Souls. The Reason of this also is the fad confequence of it, viz. his departing from them . and the mi-Series that will follow such a departure of God. Let the Church of Chrift, Let the particular Soul take beed of this. God is not fo tied to any people, nor to any particular Soul but he can depart from them; yea, and he hath threatned to depart: and he hath fald, Wo unto them when I shall depart from them. Gods presence is elther his effential Presence ; thus he filleth Heaven and Earth ; of this the Pfalmift speaks, Pfalm 139, that God cannot depart from a people; Or 2. His gracious presence. Thus he is present, i. In the Church, he hath faid he will dwell in the midft of it. 2. In the particular Soul. This presence of Christ is by his Liftuences, his continuing his Ordinances, his Meffengers, his Candlettick amongs them; and the gracious influences of bis providence, being a covering upon mount Zion, and upon her affemblies, and all her Glory. Now as to this presence the Lord is said to depart from a people, when he removeth his candleflick, calls off his meffengers, deprives them of his Ordinances, withdraweth the protection of his providence from a Church, or from a people. This is a judgment which God often in Scripture doth threaten to a finful Church and people. And fo for his presence with the particular Soul, it is in the gracious influences, and manifestations of the Spirit of his Grace, given them for their comfort, or for their profit, or the merciful influences of his Providence watching over them, bleffing and prospering them, &c. And God is said as to both these to depart from a particular person, when he gives them up to blindness of mind, hardness of heart, vain affections, errors when he leaveth them fad, and without fenfible Comforts, weak, and unable to refift their temptations, or their corruptions, when he withdraweth his Providence from their outward man de. And I need fay no more indeed to fhew the great mileries that follow

follow poor creatures when the Lord departeth from them. See only that one Text, Hos. 9. 11, 12. As for Epbraim, their glory shall fly away like a Bird, from the birth and from the Womb, and from the conception. Though they bring up their Children, yet I will be reave them, that there shall not be a man left; wo also unto them when I shall depart from them! Now that God useth to depart from a people, when they stir him up and awake him by their sins, is plain from the whole course of Scripture, 2 Chron, 15, 2. The Lord is with you while you he with him, and if you seek him, he will be found of you; but if you for sake him he will for sake you. Let this be sufficient for the Explication, and confirmation of the point. The Application of it now solloweth. It shall only be in a word of Exhortation.

Use I.

r. Br.

To dissipate all men from disturbing the rest of Christ with bis Sponse. I shall first press it as to the forreign disturbers of the Church. 2. As to those that disturb the Church from within, such are Hereticks. 3. As to the members of the Church, that they by

their Sins will not diffurb Chrifts rest amongst them.

In the First place, Let me beseech you to take beed of stirring up, and awaking of Jesus Christ in his rest with his Church by any mole-stations from without, pursuing of others for righteousness sake, and for their conscience-sake, is that which our corrupt nature is very prone to; ever since Abels time, he that was born after the sless bath persecuted him that hath been born after the Spirit. I cannot expect that the world should grow kinder, the root of the matter is still in it, I mean that enmity which God hath put betwixt the seed of the woman, and the seed of the Serpent: The world in its old age it is likely will yet grow more teachy. My business is only to perswade you, that if Israel will transgress, yet you would not Sin. Let this drudgery-work of the Devils be done by whose hand it will; God will use some as rods to do it, but be you none of the twigs that shall make it up. Consider,

1. This is a firring up, & an awaking of the Lord Jesus Christ. When a Church of God walks in order, enjoying a fellowship in the Ordinances, all the Ordinances of his Gospel; Christ is as it were in bed, and a-sleep. In such a Church, there is never an assembly of mount Zion, but hath its Glory; never a Church of Christ walking in order, but Christ is in the midst of it yea and he is at rest there. Is aid, in the name of God propounds a question, ch. 66. v. 1. where is the place of my rest? the Prophet had told us before where it is. If.

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11. 10. The root of leffe should be lifted up for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and bis reft shall be glorious; Christ resteth in his Gospel-Churches. Now those that disturb these affemblies of Zion; do not only do an injury to the Souls of the poor people that are the members of these Assemblies; but they do an injury to Christ, they disturb his rest which he hath faid is Glorious. Christ hath had a wearifome laborious work upon the Earth in the purchasing of his redeemed ones, in the 24thering them in unto himself; and this is the fruit of his labour. the travel of his Soul: now that he is ascended up on high, he rejoiceth, he resteth in the assemblies of his people worshipping him in Spirit and in truth. The persecutor of those that sear God cannot break off the Union between Christ and his people, but they may scatter the Churches of Christ, they may break their orders and thus difturb Chrifts rest: Oh! what an ingrateful thing is this, poor man, thou art deceived! thou thinkelt (like Paul) that thou only disturbest a company of Puritans, a company of persons whom thou callest factious Sectaries, Fanaticks (what men please): Ah! but if this people live in the observance of Christs Laws, Christs Ordinances, thou disturbest Christ, and thy rage reacheth up to Heaven.

2ly, Consider with thy self what a consider transgression this is. Sinning upon some great provocation is not to be excused, none ought to receive any provocation to fin against God, but by how much any act of sin hath less provocation, by so much greater the sin is. Even Reason itself teacheth us this; now what kind of provocation is this for me to disturb such a Church of God, such Christians in their Gospel-sellowship, because they are not of my mind; possibly they are more righteous than I, more afraid to sin against God than I am, more jealous of Gods glory than I am, &c. what wrong is it to me, that another is afraid of Gods wrath in a particular where I am not afraid of it? what cause is this to me to be an instrument of the ruine of his life, his Liberty, his Estate, &c. is it not possible that I should be mistaken, and misconceive of the will of God? have I an infallible Spirit? or

are those men infallible, whom I think to serve?

Thirdly, Consider, That there is no one fin, which upon record of Scripture and of all story, appears to have been so dreadfully re venged, on all persons, in all ages, as this sin bath been. I gave you plentiful instances of this before: If it were lawful for me to cure mine e-

Ad. 9. 1, 2.

nemy ; pext to the wishing of him a firebrand actually burning in Hell, I would wish him a persecutor of the Church of God upon the Earth, I would wish him such a one as Saul was (before his Conversion) a man breathing out threatnings, and revilings and flaughters against the disciples of the Lord Jesus ; and folliciting power and authority from the chief-Priefts, that where-ever he found any worthipping God in Spirit and in Truth, he might bind and imprison them. I should think that if I thus cursed any, I should wish his Soul to Hell, his body to ruin, his posterity to a curse, and his children to beg their bread, and his house to be made a jaques. In thort that I had withed him all evil to which he is subjected by his humane nature. Oh! take heed of having any thing of this nature to do. Do not only fear to be Principals, but to be accessaries in it. Mr. Fox tells us of one Judg Mergan in England that was but the Instrument of the Law to condemn the religious Lady, Jane Dudley: God foon after fruck him with madness, he died raving and in his mad-fits (to shew what stuck upon his Conscience) crying out, Have away the Lady fane from before me. But I shall add no more to this Branch, I hope you all tremble at this Sin.

2. Er.

Secondly. You that are members of the Church of Christ, take you beed of disturbing the rest of Christ, and of awaking him by causeless divisions. A man resteth ill in an house that is full of noises; Christs rest is highly disturbed in his Church, by his peoples Divisions. Divisions are either in matters of Dollrine; these are called Errors, and (if publickly and pertinaciously maintained) Herefies. Of these the Apostle speaks, Rom. 16. 15. Mark them which make Divisions among you; contrary to the Doctrine which you bave received. Every Error is not of this nature, but Errors in Fundamentals; and those not kept private to our selves, but openly published and maintained to the disturbance of the Church of Chaift, and the drawing of others into that fnare. There are cther Divisions which relate to practice in matters of Worthin and Order, these are called Schisms. Now every separation is not finful, every leparation is not Schifm: No, every separation from a Church, that may yet have a name of a True-eburch is not finful. In thost where a man cannot joyn with any company in the Worthip of God, without Sin, there feparation cannot be a Sin. The Church of the Jews were indeed a declining decaying Church, but yet they were a Church, Ads. 19. 8, 9. hence Paul owneth them for

far, as to go into their Synagogues, and for three months together to preach and to dispute amongst them : But when they were hardned, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, be departed from them and separated the Disciples disputing daily in the School of one Tyrannus. When any number of baptized people owning the name of the Church of God, grew corrupt in matter of Dollrine, or in matter of Worship; fo that other Christians cannot enjoy the Ordinances of God with them without fin, a feparation from them (especially if hardned against a Reformation, or reproaching it,) is so far from being Christians sin, that it is their Duty, having first used all due means in their places for a Reformation. But that is a canfeles separation, and a finful Schism, when men separate from a Church of God with whom (without any fin against God) they might conscientiously walk in fellowship according to the order of the Gospel. This is indeed very finful, and is a fin that ditturbeth Christs rest in a Church. Such were those at Corinth, one faid I am of Paul, another, I am of Apollo, another, I am of Cepbas. Hence now we justly contemp the Papifts Reproach of Schifmaticks; we have indeed feparated from them, but it was because we could not continue with them, without countenancing and joyning with their gross Idolatries and Superstitions, while yet we confess the fin of Schism to be great, and that it is very unlawful to separate from a true Church of Christ, in whose communion we may keep and enjoy the Ordinances of Christ without sinning against the Laws of Christ. That therefore which I here defire you to beware of, is, the entertaining, publishing, and pertinaciously maintaining Doctrines, which make divisions contrary to the truth received. It is very possible that a Christian may otherwise think in some matters of Doctrine, than doth the Church of which he is a member. What shall he do? I answer, These Doctrines may be of lesser moment, such as touch not the foundations of Faith and Holiness: Or elfe 2. Such as are more momentous, and do touch the foundations be they what they will. Every Christian is not bound to publish what he believes to draw others to his party. The Apostle hath a good Rule Rom. 14.22. Haft thou faith, bave it to thy felf before God. There is no Obligation can lie upon a man to publifh all his notions, it may be many of them are of no moment, at least not comparatively with the Churches peace. I confess, if one be called to teach the people, it altereth the case : for as be believetb.

lieveth, so be must speak. But yet even there a man is not bound to preach every notion of truth, if the notion be not necessary to be believed; a Minister is bound to conceal it, where the Church is of another mind. If it be necessary and a fundamental, I must consess the case is hard. In such a case I think the Ministers conscience will bind him to preach it, and yet if he doth he sins, and the Church is bound to censure it; so miserable is the case of him that hath an erring conscience in things of this high moment.

2. A second thing which I would have you beware of is making factions and parties, and separations from a Church, where you can avoid them without sinning against God. This is the second Branch.

3. Br.

A third thing that I would plead with you for, is . That you would not by any fuch Church-fins as usually ftir up and awake Christ disturb Christs communion with bis Church. The Church is one Body. There is a Church-catholick wifible, which is the whole number of Christian people over the face of the Earth embracing the Doctrine of Christ. This is not that I am speaking of for thus Christ shall never be stirred up and awaked until the day of Judgment. But now as every drop of water is called water, fo every greater or leffer number of Christians in any Nation, or City, or Parish, or House may be called a Church: and the lowest notion of a particular Church, is such a number as anywhere ordinarily meet together for the enjoyment of Christ in his Ordinances. This Church we usually say is meerly Entative I where any fuch number of private Christians are, though without publick Officerssor Ministerial and Organical, where they have Officers to dispense out the Ordinances of the Gospel to them. I am speaking now of a Church in this notion with which Christis present, and in which he refts. O do not you do any thing to ffir up and awake your Love! Are any of you members of any fuch Societies enjoying sweet and comfortable fellowship with Christ in his Ordinances? Oh, take heed of fuch fins as are incident to fuch Societies, and bodies of People, which use to awake and fir up Christ! Will you know what they are? I will hint some of them to you briefly. I hinted fome of them to you before, I will again touch upon them.

1. The first shall be corruptions in matter of Doctrine and toleration of them. This is that which was laid to the charge of the Church of Pergamus, Rev. 2.1415. she had them within her that held the Doctrine of Balasm and the Niebolaitans. Many think that those Doctrines were, That Whoredom and Fornication were lawful, and that Communion with Idolaters was lawful, and to the Church of Thyatira, v. 20. Take heed of these things, and especially of Doctrines tending to practical liberty and licentious in sinning. Take heed of such Errours. Luther called the Article of Justification, the Article of a standing or falling Church: God for this threatneth those two Churches of Pergamus and Thyatira in the afore-mentioned places.

2. A fecond fin is corruption in the Worship of God. I shall not much enlarge upon this here, because I spake to it in the opening of the Doctrine. This was the sin of Thyatira in part, Rev. 2.20. her members did eat things facrificed to Idols. This was the very sin for which God so often threatned his Church of the Fews, and at last utterly sorsook it; even for their corruptions in his Worship, for doing things in his Worship which be commanded them not, their own works, their own inventions. The Worship of God is a tender thing, Christ cannot rest in a Church where it is cor-

rupted and depraved.

3. A third is loofness in conversation. It is not the loofness of a particular person, that will stir up God and make him awake from his rest with his Church, but when the generality of the members of a Church grow loose and debauched, as to matter of practice in their conversations, God cannot abide to dwell there. Hence you shall find throughout all the story of the Jewish Church the lewdness of Priests and People, as to the moralities of their lives is, joyned with their corruptions in Worship, and assigned as the cause of Gods rising out of his place, and departing from them.

4. The fourth and last thing (which indeed is but the inlet to the last mentioned,) is, the loss of first Love. This God chargeth (though in different terms) upon three of the seven Charches of Asia; upon Ephisus, Rev. 2.4. He calls to her to repent, and threatneth her that if she did not, he would quickly remove her Candlestick. He chargeth it upon Sardis again, Rev. 3.1. she had a name to live, but she was dead; what she had in her that was good, was ready to dye. God calls to her to strengthen it or he would come upon her as a thief. Again, it was charged on the Church of Laodiees, Rev. 3. 16. she was neither bot nor cold, God threatens to spue her out of his mouth: God expecteth a zeal, and holy hear

and fervency of spirit in his Service, when the generality of a Church grow beartless, and dead, and cold, and flat, and they have no life in their Services, Christ quickly grows weary of them and is stirred up and awaked: But so much also for the third Branch.

Cant. 2. 8.

The Voice of my Beloved! Behold he cometh leaping upon the Mountains, skipping upon the Hills.

Ou may understand by the stile, that it is the Spouse, the Church of God, and the particular believing Soul which speaketh the words of this Text. Christ is her corelate, it is he of whom the faith, The voice of my Beloved, &c. It is the that speaketh, and it is to Christ she speaketh. In her speech we have two things to be considered : 1. The matter of it, 2. The form of it. As to the matter of it here are two things: 1. Her acknowledgment of his Voice; It is the voice of my Beloved. 2. Her discerning of bis approach; Behold! be cometh leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the bills. As to the form of it, it is I. Abrupt; The voice of my Beloved: 2. with a note of Observation or Attention, הנה Behold! he cometh leaping upon the Mountains! To make the sence perfect, You must suppose the Spouse to have lived some time in a dark condition, not hearing the Voice, nor feeing the face of the Lord Jesus Christ as formerly; The Church under persecution, not seeing her Signs, nor enjoying her Prophets as-And so as to the particular Soul not having for some time enjoyed the gradual fensible manifestation of divine Love; and so the Church or a particular Soul sitting like a disconsolate Wife in an House whose Husband is absent, and she hath not heard from him nor feen him for some good space of time: but on the fudden she hears his voice coming in the Road or Yard, and cryes out, O the voice of my Husband ! 'tis my Husbands tongue I bear, (or the like.) In fuch a manner is the Church or particular Soul here brought in ; (The voice of my Beloved foitbile.) Now this abrupt expression fignifieth two or three things to

1. That an absent Christ is yet a beloved Christ to his true Church, and to the truly believing Soul.

2. That the Spoufe of Christ will know ber beloveds voice, though be

bath a mbile been absent.

3. That the Spouse of Christ will greatly rejoyce to hear her beloveds voice (especially after a time of absenting himself.) For the latter part of her speech, it concerneth others; Behold, saith she, he cometh, see, where observe. 1. Her Assertion, he cometh, saith she. 2. The note of Observation prefixed to her Assertion, quickening others to observe what she saw; Behold be cometh. 3. The manner of his coming described, skipping upon the mountains and leaping upon the Hills. By the Mountains and Hills may be meant, 1. Openly, they being the places of the earth more conspicuous than others, 2. The Nations and Kingdoms of the world may be meant; 3. Difficulties and impediments may be understood; who are thou, O great Mountain, before Zerubabel? Zech. 4, 7. So also Isaish 40. v. 4. every Mountain and hillshall be brought low. From this latter part of the Spouses speech, observe,

4. That though the Lord Christ may withdraw, and absent himself from his Church, and from the Souls of his people, for a time, yet he will

come.

5. That when he comes, he will come skipping upon the Mountains, and leaping upon the Hills, openly and hastily, and trampling all difficulties, and impediments under his feet.

6. That the Church, and the true members of it, will by the eye of faith, discern Christ coming, skipping upon the Mountains. And it

is the duty of all to observe it.

Thus you fee fix excellent Observations, naturally rising out of

the Text: I shall begin with them in order.

Prop. 1. An absent Christ is yet beloved by bis true Church, and by every truly believing Soul. You may easily by the phrase of the Text discern, that Christ was at this time absent from the Spouse; yet she cries out '717'71P. The voice of my beloved: Absent from her yet beloved still. Many waters will not quench Love. But let me more distinctly (in the prosecution of this point) Enquire,

1. When Christ may be faid to be absent from his Church, or from a.

particular Soul ?

2. How it appears that an absent Christ will yet be a beloved Christ to the Spouse; and wherein will the Love of the true Spouse of Christ appear to an absent Christ.

3. Whence

How Christ at any time is absent from his Spouse.

3. Whence it is, that the Spouse of Christ will love him though ab-

4. What improvement may be made of this.

Efay 49.15.

1. Qu. When may Christ be said to be SThe Church, absent from his Spouse? The believing Soul.

Efay 40. 27.

Zion hath faid, The Lord bath forfaken me, my God bath forgotten me. Facob and Ifrael faid, My way is bid from the Lord; and my judgment is paffed over by my God; but observe the Lords answer, If. 49. 15. Can a woman forget ber sucking Child. so that she should not have compassion of the fruit of the womb? yea, they may forget, but I will not forget thee : Bebold I have graven thee upon the palms of my bands, &c. and to the other observe the Lords answer, If. 40. 27, 28. why fayeft then O Jacob! why Speakeft thou O Ifrael, &c. Halt thou not beard, bast thou not known, &c. yet certain it is that Christ may absent bimself (in some sense) both from his Church, and from the truly believing Soul. The presence of God and Christ is usually distinguished into his, I. Essential presence. 2. bis Glorious presence. 2. bis Gracious presence. 1. As to his Estential presence, we have it always with us; for his infinite effence filleth Heaven, Earth, Hell, all places. Of this the Pfalmift speaks, Pfal. 139. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. Thus he is never far off from any of us. 2. As to bis Glorious presence, that is in Heaven where he doth more eminently manifest his Glory. 3. His Gracious presence, is the manifestation of his Goodness and Mercy. Gods infinite presence filling all places, is continually working; and as there is an infinite power always attending the facred effence of God, fo it is always exercifed in the world; either in a way of mercy and goodness, or in a way of feverity and justice. In works of mercy, preferving and upholding, the beings, faculties, and prosperous states of his people; ordering all means proper to that end, whether respecting the good of their Bodies and outward man, or the good of their Souls and inward man. In a way of justice, withdrawing his upholding and preferving Providence, and the means, which at other times he affords them in order to their External, Internal, or Eternal good. Now in regard, that vindicative acts of Justice. (though the Lords work) are his strange work as such which he never doth, without some cause in the creature first moving him to them: And works of goodness and mercy are the Lords more

natural works, flowing more freely, and purely from himself without any cause at all in the Creature. Hence when the Lord doth not in the world exercise that power which always attendeth his infinite being, in the preserving and upholding his Creatures, or not preserving and upholding them in their good, and prosperous estate, relating to their Bodies and Souls, and directing and giving them means proper to that end; but on the contrary exerciseth his power, in afflicting them, either by his own hand, or by the Devil, or by the hands of wicked men, the Lord is said to forsake them, and to depart from them; and during such dispensations, he is said to be afar off, to be absent, to bave left them; not that he hath not a love to them, and a care of them; but that this care for them, and Love to them, is not declared in such acts of gracious Providence as formerly, and in that respect is hidden from them? This is Christs absence from the Church, or from the Soul.

1. Christ then may be said to be absent from his Church, when his providence is not such an hedg about them as in former times, but he suffers the wild beasts and boars, wicked men, to break in upon them, to disturb their Assemblies, to drive their pastors into corners, to cast the members of it into prisons &c. when he denies unto them, the freedom and liberty of his Ordinances, that they see not their signs or Prophets (as the Psalmitt speaks, Psal. 74. v. 9.) Or when though they have his Ordinances, yet he withdraws his usual influence upon them, making his word and Sacraments sweet and savoury, powerful and effectual unto his peoples Souls.

Secondly, Christ may then be said to be absent from a particular person, when be withdraws either the influences of his good providence which it formerly had, or the gradual manifestations of his more inward, special Grace, Strengthening, Quickening, Comforting the Souls of his people. This then is that which I understood by an absent Christ; who (I say) though absent is yet beloved of the Church and of every truly believing Soul. I proceed to the second thing.

2. Q4. How doth the Spouse evidence her love to an absent

Love differently respects and entertaineth an absent & a present object. The true Church of Christ and the truly believing Soul, in the day of Gods hiding of himself from its testimeth her Love many ways.

1. By a fad, and pleafant remembrance of their former enjoyments ; pleasant to think what they were what they enjoyed; sad, to think that they are loft, and hid from their eyes. You have in the Pfalms two excellent inftances, the one of David, Pfal. 42. 4. When I remember these things I pour out my Soul within me; I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with the multitude of them that keep holyday. It is a Pfalm composed by David during the time that he was by Saul or Absolom, kept from the publick Ordinances, in this state he yet shews, that he loved God, by his pleasing himself with the remembrance of his former freedom and liberty; though it was fad to him confidering that he now wanted those opportunities. So the Church, Pfal. 127. v. I. By the Rivers of Babylon, there we fate down, yea we mept, when we remembred Zion; this spake God the beloved of this people, at this time of his absence from them. So will every true believer thew his love to Christ under withdrawings. The Soul will fit, remember and recount, Oh! what a sweet time I had when I could freely go to the house of God, and meet my God there in his Ordinances! it is true, it is a fad time with me now: but Oh! how fweet was that time, when I could go to God and fay, My Father, and hear him answer, is Ephraim my dear Child? and the believers Soul is melted in the thoughts of it; it is love that melts the Soul upon this account.

2. The Spoule will shew her Love to God and Christ at such a time. In her justifying of God under his present dispensations to her. This speaks Love, when we will not take the reproofs and Corrections of our friends unkindly, but bless and magnifie God under them. See an instance of this in David, Pfal. 22. 1, 2, 3. He telleth you in the first and second verses, that God bad for sken bim. that be was far from belping bim, and from the words of bis roaring; that be cryed day and night, and the Lord beard bim not. But (faith he v.2.) Thou art boly, O thou that inhabitest the praises of thy people! it spake a great kindness for God in Fobs heart, when in the loss of all he had, be bleffed the name of the Lord; never charged God foolifhly. And thus will every gracious Soul in the time of Gods absence from it, shew its love to him. Thus Daniel and Nebemiab and Ezra, praying in the name of the Church, still justifie God. and blefs God as having done no unrighteous thing, only confirmed the word which he had spoken by his Servants the Prophets, and punished his people feven times less than they had deserved, Se. This I say will the true Church of Christ do; this will every truely believing Soul say: I am thus, and thus afflicted, tossed with tempests, walking in the dark; but yet the Lord is a good and gracious God, and is just in all that he hath done; in all that he can do concerning his creatures. This

is a fecond particular.

3. A third way by which this Love to an absent Christ is discerned in a believing Soul, is, In a thankful receiving, and just improvement, of what of the mercy and goodness of God, it yet injoyeth. As the Lord never doth withdraw his real Love from his people. (even Ifrael was not wholly cast off, Rom. 11. 1.) fo he doth never totally withdraw his manifestative love, his gracious influences. Either his people want outward things, but have those good things that are more inward and spiritual: Or, they want fome more external means of Grace, but they have the inward prefence of God, comforting, frengthening, and quickning their Souls; or they want fome spiritual influences, But have fome others. Now I say this is a sign of Love to Christ, when they receive thankfully, and improve faithfully what they have, though they have not what they defire or would have. The woman that wants the company of her Husband, yet shews her affection to him by her joy at a letter from him, at commendations brought from a friend and herdiligent writing to him again; to doth a gracious Soul: It may be it wanteth the comforts of Gods holy Spirit and is crying out, when will thou comfort me ? but in the mean-time, the Soul rejoyceth and bleffeth God, for strength and patience in a dark condition, for what it hath though it wants much. Thus the Church in the Lamentations, Lam. 3. v. 22. It is of the Lords mercies that we are not confumed because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning, great is thy faithfulness. Thus will a gracious Soul, thus will the Church of God, thew that Christ is beloved of her, by her prizing what the hath, what the feeth, what the enjoyeth of him; and bleffing God for the portion he allotteth to her, ay, and by her improvement of them which is real thankfulocis.

By her mourning, under her present afflicted condition, Plat. 137. v. 1. We sat down by the rivers of Babylon, and wept when the remembered Sion, we bang our barps upon the willower, &c. Love

commands tears for the beloved object when lost, or not enjoyed. Mary wept when she knew not where they had laid ber Lord. Christ wept at Lazarus his Grave, at which the Jems said see bom be loved him. The mournings of a gracious Soul for the want of Gods Ordinances, or of the strengthening, comforting, quickening influences of his Spirit, which it formerly enjoyed, speaks much love; and thus doth the gracious Soul shew, that Christ is its beloved, it goes sadly mourning all the day-long, the child of the Bridechamber must mourn when the Bridegroom is

gone.

5. A fifth way by which the Spoule sheweth her Love to Christ in absence, is, By her earnest desires, after her fuller enjoyments of Christ and seeking after it. For this you have an instance at hand in the spoule in this song, Chap. 3. v. 1, 2. By night on my bed, I sought him whom my Soul loveth, I sought him but I found him not; I went about the City and the streets, and the broad-places, Seeking him whom my soul loveth, I sought him, &c. Thus the Wise shews her love to her absent Husband; the sends, she writes to him, she speaketh to every one going towards him to speak to him that he would think upon her, and return back that she might enjoy him as formerly. Thus the Church, thus the gracious Soul, shews her love to her absent Saviour. She sastes, she prayeth, she pleads with God for his ancient mercies, &c.

6. A fixth way (which is the last which I shall mention by which the Spouse of Christ sheweth (in the time of his absence from her) that he is ber beloved, is by keeping fixed and close to his Commandments, notwithstanding her want of the Encouragement of his ancient mercies. You have an admirable instance of this in the Church mentioned, Pfal. 44. v. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. In all which Verses you have a sad story how God had afflicted her, but yet (saith she) v. 17. All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee nor dealt falsely in thy Covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither are our steps declined from thy law, &c. v. 19, 20. And indeed this speaks great love when the frowns and rebukes of Christ will not drive the Soul

from him : but will fome fay.

1. Whence is this that Christ in absence is so much beloved of

a gracious Soul?

1. The first and indeed the great reason of it is, The Divine Power and force of Love, Divine Love (I mean). We see there is a great force

force in Love that is of a meaner extract than that which is from heaven heavenly; How frequent are the experiences we fee among & men and women! The man it may be is an unkind Husband, leaves his Wife, carrieth himself every way roughly and inhumanely to her; yet the cannot but love him, and all his unkindness cannot alienate her heart from him. If he be absent, the fends, the writes to him to return, the is as careful of his commands, of his estate, as if he had never done any unkindness to her: what reason can be given of this but only the nature of Love, which is of so great a Force, and Power that in this she acts not so much out of choice as from a necessity of nature? But how Powerful then must divine love be! That fire which comes from Heaven, and is kindled, and blown up in the Soul by the holy Spirit of God. The gracious Soul loves God (in fome proportion) as we say that God loves himself necessarily, and

yet freely, and many waters cannot quench this Love.

2. A second Reason which may be rendred of it is the Souls Spiritual Illumination. The Soul in this exercise of Love acts but according to its reasonable nature, supposing its Spiritual Illumination. There are some Persons upon whom we have so necessary a dependance that we cannot be out with them, some things of which we have so necessary and constant an use that whatever evil we have received from them, yet we cannot but love them and that from a Principle of Reason dictating to us to consult our own Good. The gracious Soul knows that God is to it the Fountain of all good; that it could better be without the Sun in the firmament, or the light in the air, than without the presence of God. It saith with Peter (when our Saviour asked him and the rest if they also would go away.) whither should we go? we know that with thee are the words of eternal life &c. Hence, if the Lord be in any measure absent from him, it cannot but earnefly defire his return, and in all things endeayour to procure his return unto it again. --- It also knows how much it hath deserved at Gods hands, of affliction and misery, and how little mercy is its due; and therefore cannot but justifie God in his withdrawing of himself and also thankfully receive what mercy God will please to bestow on it. But I have said enough for the proof of fo plain a proposition; let me in a few words come to the Application.

In the first place this letteth us see the great difference, be- Use 14

twixt a Soul that is truly gracious, and another Soul that hath a name to live only but is indeed dead. The one loves a frowning, absent Christ: The other only pretendeth love to God whiles that God is present with it. But you will fay, Is God then ever present with the Souls of hypocrites? have they any thing of the

presence of God?

If you remember what I faid more generally of the prefence of God before, the answer is easy. For any thing of the presence of Gods special Grace, a wicked man hath nothing, knoweth nothing concerning it, but God makes his Sun to thine, and his rain to fall both upon the just and unjust. Now whiles a wicked man thrives, and profpers in the world, and abounds with the good things of the world, he makes a great profession and thew of Love to God: But if the Lord withdraweth himfelf from the Tabernacle of the wicked man, all his pretended love, all his profession is at an end : He is indeed the same which the Devil flandered Fob to be, if the Lord plucks up the hedge which he hath made about him he curfeth him to his face. But now the child of God is quite of another flamp, however God dealeth by him yet he dares not flart from God, nor deal failly in his Covenant; though he killeth me (faith holy 30b) yet I will put my truft in him. The former is as an hired Servant to God, not to be kept without kind words and all imaginable flattering of him; the other is like a Son which knoweth not how to live out of his Fathers House, and therefore cleaves unto God, let God do what he will unto him; knowing, that he cannot do well to be angry with the Lord. The gracious Soul loveth God for himself and for that Goodness and Excellency which it feeth in God: The wicked man loveth God only for the good things which he hath or hopeth to receive from God. You therefore that profess to love the Lord Jesus Christ, and to be the Servants of God : By this you shall be tried, whether it be in truth yea or no. Have you any kindness, any beatings of heart for an absent Christ, any love, any desires toward him, when he is not unto you as at other times? this indeed will speak you to have the truth of love in your Souls.

I shall conclude what I shall speak to this first Proposition, with a word of Exhortation. You have heard what is the genius of a gracious Soul, and of the true Church of Christ: Oh! let this Spirit be found in all of us, who profess our selves members

Exhort.

of this Church, and to have this truth of divine Grace. I thall direct my speech now unto you who are true members of the Church members not only of the Church vilible but invisible. God hath for a long time favoured you, with all tokens of his presence; he hath given you pastors according to his own heart, who have fed you with wifdom and understanding, fuch as have known, how to frengthen the difeafed, to heal that which was fick, to bind up that which is broken, to feek that which was loft, and to bring again that which was driven away, and to fresh a word in feafon to the weary foul, (the greatest fign of Gods presence with, and favour to a people.) You have a long time been fed in fac, and green Pastures, and by pleasant waters, enjoying the Ordinances of God, in their purity and according to the inflication of Jefus Chrift. Suppose now that the Lord hould turn his hand upon you, finite the Paftors, and featter the fleep; and fond you thepherds, that thall feed themselves and not the flock. that thall eat the fat and cloth themselves with the wooll; and not feed the flock but kill it, (fuch as are described Ezech. 34. 3,4 5.) that neither strengthen the diseased nor heal the sick, nor bind up the broken a not bring again that which was driven away, fuch as the Prophet Maiab fpeaks of Ifa. 46. 10. Watchmen that are blind (the worst quality surely that Watchmen can have) and ignorant, dumb doggs that cannot bark, fleeping, lying down, and louing to flamber; yet greedy doggs that never can have enough, shepherds that cannot understand, that all look to their aren mays every one for his gain from their quarter. God hath bleffed you with liberty, prosperity in the world, and some of you if not with this grace and that to boot, yet with the inward quickenings, and comfortings, and ftrengthenings of his grace. Thus God hath been present with you. Suppose now you should not fee and feel the presence of God, as at sormer times, warming, comforting, quickening your Souls: Yet, Oh! Let him be your beloved still! when you fit by the Rivers of Babylon and weep, yet, O remember Sion! When you cannot enjoy God as formerly, yet thew your love like David, Pfal. 42. 1, 2, 3. Panting after God, and the true and pure enjoyments of him, as the beart pantesh after the water-brooks. Thirsting for the enjoyment of God, even the living God. Let your tears be your meat, day and night, whiles your enemies; whiles your conscience (turn'd your enemy) fay, where are now your Pastors? where are your affemaffemblies? where are your Ordinances? where are your comforts, &c. Whiles you remember how you went with the multitude to the House of God with the voice of joy and praise. Shew your love to God byjuftifying God under his difpensations, and condemning your felves, for your unprofitableness, for your letting your beloved fland at your dores and knock while his locks were wet with the dew of the night, and you put him off with excuses, as the Spouse Cant. c. 1, 2. shew your love by a thankful receiving and just improving of what of God you do injoy or may enjoy. By your mourning before God for your present wants, hanging your harps upon the willows; and weeping when you remember Sion: By your earnest prayers and wreftlings with God for the returns of his love, and favour to you: For Zions fake not bolding your peace, and for Hiernsalems Take, and for your own Souls fake not refifting nor letting God to rest till he make his righteousness to go forth as brightness, and bis salvation like a light that burneth. Shew your love finally, by not departing from God, keeping close to his truths, ways, ordinances; though (as the Pfalmift: fpeaks). You be broken in the place of Dragons, and covered with the shadow of death. Keep your Souls liftning for every voice of your beloved in every hour of darkness, ready to skip at the least found of his feet or words of his mouth, and able to diffinguish betwixt the voice of your true fhepherd and the voice of strangers. I shall instead of many use but one Argument to you.

God is never long abjent from that Church, nor from that particular Soul, whose affections continue up, and strong with, and for him. That Church, that Soul where there is a loss of the first love, is in a sad state. But love melts the heart of him who is love. Mark the Spouse, Christ was her beloved, though absent yet her beloved; what doth she see, what doth she say next? Behold be cometh skipping upon the mountains, and leaping upon the bills. Let Christ his ways, his Ordinances, be your beloved, and look but out with an eye of Faith you shall see him coming to your satisfaction, aye though there be to the eye of your Sense mountains and hills in the way, great impediments and difficulties; yes he will come leaping over mountains and hills; triumphing over all difficulties and make haste to the tears and cryes, and succours of his people. Thus much shall serve to have spoken to the first

Proposition observed from the Text.

It is the voice of my beloved, &c.

Told you the last day, that in these words, which are the former part of the Spouses speech, there is a double acknowledgment, 1. Of the Spouse's Affection, and Relation to Christ. My beloved, 2. Of her beloved's voice. It is (saith she) the voice of my beloved. I told you the last day that they are words spoken with passion and affection, rejoyceing, as much as if it were; O, There is my beloved! I hear him, it is his voice: hence I raised two Observations the last day, I will put them together.

The true Church of Christ, and the truly-believing Soul will know Prop. Christs voice; and rejoyce in it especially, after some time of his absenting himself from it. The Proposition is the same with that of our Saviour in the parable of the good shepherd, and the sheep, John 10.4. The sheep follow him, for they know his voice, v. 14. I know my sheep, and am known of mine. In the opening of the Proposition, I shall do these things.

I will inquire, what is this voice of Christ.

How the Spouse doth know the voice of Christ: And is able to say,

It is the voice of my beloved.

How it doth appear that the true Spouse of Christ doth know his

voice, and doth rejoyce in it.

Whence is this joy of the true Spouse of Jesus Christ, when it bears 4. Q2.

What use may make of this?

5. Qu'

What is this voice of the beloved? this voice of the Lord Jefus Christ?

A voice in the ordinary notion of it amongst men, is nothing else but a sound, formed in the throat, and caused by the tongue, by which the creature expressent its mind to another. Now as God is pleased to express his mind to us, so he is said to have a voice, though he hath no body; nor any bodily parts. Now as God hath many ways to express his mind to people, so he may be said to have divers voices. God sometimes expressent his mind to people, by alls of providence; these are called the Lords voice. Thus Psal. 29.3, 4, 5. The voice of the Lord breaketh the Cedars.

Cedars, yea, the Lord breaketh the Cedars of Lebanon, &c. But the Text speaketh of the voice of a beloved. Now there are two ways by which God doth more eminently declare his mind to his People, which above all others are more eminently called his voice,

1. By bis word, 2. By bis Spirit.

1. By his word; his word of truth, which is contained in the boly Scriptures, and (yet more firicity) his word opened and preached by his messengers God you know of old, spake unto his people immediately in the giving of the Law, Exod: 19.20. but they were not able to hear it, and therefore defired that Mofes might speak from that time. It hath been Gods ordinary course. to communicate his mind unto his people by Ministers. Of old there were Prophets, Priefts, &c. Under the gospel. 1. Christ himself revealed his Fathers will; he chose, 12. and 70. and when he ascended up on high, he gave Gifts unto men, faith the Apostle; he made some Apostles, some Evangelitts, some Pastors and Teachers. Now their faithful revealing the mind and will of God, is the Lords voice, Luk. 10, 16. He that beareth von beareth me. 2 Cor, 5. 20. Gad befeecbeth you by us, me pray you in Christs stead. Not that the words of every one that calleth himself a Minister speaketh the words of God; no, nor are the words of many that are ministers. The voice of God. But only what they speak from the Evidence of the word of God. There were false Prophets of old, and there were false. Apostles under the gospel, and there are false teachers fills and were it not so there would be no difficulty in differning the voice of dur beloved, but the Spouse knoweth the votes of ber beloved. The true Church is able to discern of Doctrine, and so is the true Believer. When I speak of the true Church of Chrift, I mean the number of Gods elect: For take the Church in the other notion as visible, and except you understand it of the whole body of it in the world. I dare not fay it is true. The Papilis tell us indeed that they have an infallible chair; but all Protestants affirm that no particular Church is infallible, but any particular Church may err and not discern the voice of its beloved. And when I fay every particular believer, doth difern this voice of its beloved, I mean not infallibly; it is very possible, that true believers may think fuch a one speaks the language of Christ, when indeed he speaks nothing lefs. But in a great measure it is true, I fay in a great measure : believers have not a perfect diferning fpirit, but they will will in a great measure discern Notions and things that differ, and know him that speaks the words of Christ, from him that speaks the Lyes and Vanities of men, or of his own heart. Rev. 2. 2. The Church of Ephesia tried them which said they were Apostles and were not, and sound them Liars, you shall find that some other Churches

did not so in that Chapter.

Secondly, There is another voice of God, which is the voice of his Spirit speaking secretly to the beart by way of Impression and Suggestion, &c. As God doth sometimes let his people know his mind by his great and mighty works of Providence (which are therefore called his Voice) And fometimes by a found in the Air, (as to the Tews, Exod. 20. to Saul, Alis. 9. 4.) And fometimes by his word, and the Ministry of it; (as he ordinarily speaks,) so fometimes he speaketh to them in a more inward secret way : By the fecret Suggestions and Impressions of his Spirit upon their bearts. Now as every voice from a Pulpit is not the voice of God: Hananiah as well as Feremiab, may speak from thence; so neither is every Suggestion made to or Impression made upon our Spirits, to be looked upon as the voice of Christ. Hence there is a room for difeeraing, and diffinguishing, and this is it which I fay, that the true believer and the true Church doth in a great measure know and difcern this voice of its Beloved; thefe Suggestions and Impressions, from other Suggestions and Impressions. The second Question follows.

How dath the true Spoufe know thefe voices of Chrift more than 2. Od.

others that are not fo near to him?

That the Spouse of Christ doth thus know is certain; Christ saith, bis sheep know bis Voice. The Spouse saith, is is the voice of my Beloved. The Question is how they know it. Now in things that differ, to discern one thing from another, there must necessarily be supposed; some certain and infallible Rules or Tokens, by which they may be so distinguished. 2. There must be supposed in those that make the Judgment, an ability of making an application of both the differing things, to that common Test and rule of Tryel.

That there is a real and vast difference betwirt the voice of Christ and the voice of Strangers, the voice of our Beloved and the voice of Others, is most certain and undoubtedly true.

That this difference may be discerned by men and women, this is also most certain; how else doth Christ say? My sheep bear my voice,

voice: And the Spouse here; It is the voice of my beloved. How else did the Church of Ephesus try those that said they were Apostles, and found them Liars? Or, why doth the Apostle commandus, to prove all things, I Thessal, 5.21. to try the Spirits, I fo.4 1. not believing every Spirit? But supposing I say both these; yet to make up this Judgment by us, 1. We must have a rule of Tryal. 2. We must have an ability of applying the voice to that rule; and accordingly as we are able infallibly or fallibly, more or less certainly, to make application of the voice to the Rule; so our knowledg and discerning of the

voice will be more or less certain.

1. The Rule is unquestionably the written word of God. The Papists say it is the Word of God written or unwritten; that which they make the unwritten Word of God, is the Traditions of men; the Tradition of what they call the Catholick Church: So they make the voice of the Church, (without further dispute to be the voice of God,) and they tell us it cannot err. All Protestants deny this, and make the word and Word alone, (I mean the written Word) to be the Lapis Lydin, the Touchstone to try all Dodrines that are delivered to them. This was the sense of the Prophets of old, If. 8. 20. To the Law and to the Testimony; if they fpeak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Saint Paul under the New-Testament, Gal. 1, 8, 9. Though we or an Angel from Heaven, Preach any other Gofpel unto you than that which we have Preached, let bim be accurfed, v. o. As we faid before, so say I now again; If any man preach any other Gospel unto you. than that you have received let him be accurfed. And Ads. 17. 11. those noble Bereans were commended, for fearching the Scriptures, to fee if those things were fo which Saint Paul himself Preached ; yet we may presume, that Saint Paul did know the mind of God, as infallibly as the Pope, or any company of men that should call themfelves the Church. The fum is; God hath given us his holy Scriptures written, which by their own Light, Majefty and Glory, appear to be the Word of God; and by these the Spouse of Christ knoweth, when men speak in Christs name, and when they speak in their own name : When they Preach Truths in the name of the Lord; and when they speak Lies and the Vanities of their own hearts, in the name of the Lord (profaning his Holy Name.) I fay by these and by these alone, comparing the Doctrines, and Exhortations of Ministers, or pretended Ministers, and judging them true or false, the voice of Christ, or the follies of men, as they agree

or difagree with the Holy Scriptures as they are revealed, or not revealed there.

2. But Secondly to make this true Discerning and Judgment: 1. There must be supposed in them that make it, a power to make application of the thing to be tryed to the rule of Tryal, and to judg of its agreement, or disagreement with the Rule; and as any one hath more or less of this ability this way, so his judgment will be more or less true or false. For example; you have Scales and Weights belong to your Market, which are the standard of your Market. And there are in the world those that sell by false Weights, and false Ballances, as well as such who sell by just Weights; and it is matter of justice for Magistrates to inquire and judg. The rule of Judgment is the market. Standard, and Meafore; but that is of itself a dead thing; and to make a judgment you must suppose Officers T. That shall be able to compare one with another. 2. That shall actually do it. For although there be Standard-Measures and Weights, and other false Weights; yet if the Officer be a fool, or blind, he cannot discern the falthood; nor though he be able he cannot do it unless he doth actually apply one to the other, and compare one with the other. So doth the Spoule of Christ, the true Church, and the true believing Soul; know the voice of Christ in the publick Ministry of the Word from the voice of Vsin men; and the voice of his Spirit in secret Suggestions and Impressions, by comparing both with the Standard, the written Word of God, and judging, whether the Doctrines have any foundation there; Whether the Suggestions and Impressions which it hath, or which others pretend to, be according to that; as the Bereaus did, Ads. 17. 11. But here now is the Grand Queffion.

Whether every Church, and every true believer, be able thus to compare Doctrines delivered by men, with the Word, and to make up a certain Judgment so as to say this is the voice of my Beloved? Otherwise, what they ought to do; when one says, this is the voice of Christ, another

faith it is not?

i. The Papifts do not only deny this ability, to compare and judg, to private Christians, but also to all Churches (except their own) but for their own Church, she they say is infallible, or he rather; for the Pope (at last) proves their Church in this case; and whatsoever he determines to be the voice of Christ, to be confonant, or dissonant to the Scriptures; to be the will of God, or not the will of God, that is the will of God; for he cannot err (forsooth)

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and every one is bound what-ever his own eyes see of truth, to hold his eyes and wink, to see and not see, but blindly believe: this is the voice of Christ, and will of God, and do according-

ly.

2. Others deny this infallibility both to particular private Chriflians; yea and to any particular Church under Heaven. They fay it is the Churches duty, and every particular Christians duty, to inquire when they hear any voice pretended to be the voice of Christ, whether it be so or no, and to judg of it; but they say they may be deceived in judgment. However it is the duty of a private Christian, out of a just reverence to the Church of Christ, orderly gathered together, and in the name Christ with prayer confulting the mind of God; to weigh, and examine what they fay : But fay they in all matters of doctrine Christians can believe nothing, but what to the evidence of their particular Consciences appeareth to be the voice and will of Christ. Only some in matters of Rites and Ceremonies, think private persons must be still blindfold, and believe, they are lawful, because the Church saith so. Aguinas (though a Papist) spake better Divinity, affirming with others; That in all matters of practice every one is bound to examine his Actions, according to the Knowledg which he hath of the will of God, whether it be natural, infused, or acquired, and to act according to the guidance of his own reason: And cannot in the least action, either act blind-fold, without a discerning, first, that it is the voice of its beloved, the will of God; much less contrary to the dictate of his Conscience telling him upon the best information, that it can get of the will of God in the case, that this is not the will of God, or that the voice of Christ in the case is otherwife. I should inlarge in the proof of this reasonable and most evident truth, but that I rememember, I have lately done it, very largely in this place.

But now to the Question, Whether then is every Sponfe of Christ,

able to discern and judging infallibly in the case?

I answer. 1. Every true believer, is or may be able in some measure, to compare what is pretended to be the voice of Christ, with the word of God, which is his most undoubted voice. This will evidently appear, to him that considers, That we having the Word of God (which is the rule) night us in our mouth, in our own language, &c. there needs no more to this comparing, than an ability to read it and to exercise our reason in comparing, what we hear, with what

Sol.

what we there read and fee. Now there is no true believer, but either can read, or learn to read, or can hear the Word of God read to it: None but hath some ability to use his Reason, in comparing what he hears with what he reads; indeed some Christians are thore able than others, as they are more acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, and more able to exercise their Reason; but I lay every one is in some measure able to do this, and may be able, or further able to do it.

Secondly as to judgment; whereas it is either infallible or falli-Ble. Though no particular Church nor particular Christian, can in all cases make a Judgment upon the poice of Christ infallibly but fo that it may be deceived; vet the true Church of Christ, and every particular Soul that is the Spoule of Christ, hath some ability to judg and determine of the voice of Christ; and to distinguish it from the voice of others, by judging of it upon comparing it with the Holy word of God. This certainly is the least that can be made of this Text, and that John 10. and from thefe many Scriptures where in order to it, they are commanded to fearch the Scriptures; To try the Spirits, to prove all things, &c. I say it is possible they may in Judgment be deceived; it is possible, and sometimes apparent that they are fo; but yet in a great measure their Judgment will be certain: And the reason is, I. Because they have the Spirit of God; which it is faid shall teach them all things, and guide them into all truth, &c. It is true, as it was faid of the Prophets, That the Spirit of Prophefy did not always touch the bearts of the Prophets. So the Spirit of God may possibly leave a Church, and leave a Soul, which happening, They do not know the voice of their Beloved; which is the cause, why particular Churches (especially when they have come to be debauched with loofness of life) have erred for thousands of years together. And concerning particular persons God hath given up many (who received not the truth in the love of it) to strong delusions, to believe a Lie. But while the Church of God keepeth itself pure, and keepeth the presence of God with it, while the Christian keeps his integrity, and walks close with God; Ordinarily, by the athiftance of Gods Holy Spirit, it is able to judg of truth and error, of what is and what is not the voice of Christ. Those promises, Joh. 14.26. v. 17. Fob. 16. 13. are not idle words.

3. A Christian (thirdly) cannot act contrary to what bimself discerneth from the word of God to be the voice of his Beloved. The

3. Qu.

word, and will of God, is our Rule, our Compass; we can fail by no other, act by no other; what-ever our Conscience tells us is the will of God, we ought to do, what they tell us is not the voice of our Beloved, or is contrary to the voice of our Beloved, that we cannot believe, we cannot do. Let all the men of the world tell us, it is the voice of our beloved, I say we cannot do it, unless we see it with our own eyes, and hear it with our own ears, and have it evidenced from our own Consciences. We are not beasts but men, and to be led by Gods Word, and our own Reason working upon it, and can follow no other Rule; our Consciences must say unto us, It is the voice of our Beloved or we cannot act; much less if they say, fo far as we can by testimony hear and discern. The voice of our Beloved is quite contrary. I would not be mistaken, as if I thought that we must have a letter of Scripture for every particular action. I do allow the just reason and consequences of Scripture, and do believe, that what can by plain and true inference, be concluded from Scripture by the use of our Reason, ought to be looked upon by us as the will of God, and the voice of Christ: I only fav. That this will of God, and voice of Christ, whether read, and heard in the plain letter of Scripture, so that he who runneth may read, or concluded by inference, it must be seen with our own eyes, and read by our selves; and it is no sufficient evidence to any Soul, to found the least practice upon, that the Pope, or a Council, or the Church, &c. faith, It is the voice of Christ. And fo much for this great question: I come now to the third.

How it doth appear that the true Spoule of Christ doth know his voice and rejoyce in it; and is glad of it, that is, is generally able, to discern truth from error, and the Motions, Suggestions, and Impressions which are from the Spirit of Christ, from those which are from our selves, or from the evil Spirit; that is, 1. That through the assistance of Grace she knows it; and, 2. Generally, and

Ordinarily the knows it, though not infallibly.

I answer, 1. It appeareth from the evidence of Scripture, Joh. 10. 14. Iknow my sheep, saith our Saviour, and am known of mine. Saint Paul prayed for the Philipians, Phil. 1. 10. that they might try the things that differed, (we translate it approve the things that are excellent; but your Margents of the Bible justify that translation.) I quoted to you those Scriptures before which contain the promise of the Spirit, to teach Gods people all things, to lead them into all truth; indeed all those passages of the New-

Testament,

Testament, which speak of the Spirit of God, as having received the Spirit, and as having the Spirit dwelling in them, prove this truth. To this purpofe are those other Texts, Ifa. 54. 13. All thy children shall be taught of God. John 7. 17. If any man will do his will that fent me, be shall know my dollrine, whether it be of God or no. Pfalm 25. 14. The fecret of the Lord is with them that fear 1 Cor.2.15. He that is Spiritual judgeth all things. Matth. 13.11. To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of bea-I John 5. 6. The Spirit beareth witness because the Spirit is truth; ver. 10. He that believeth on the Son of God bath this witness in bimself. Obj. Will any one say, What then? cannot a Believer be mistaken? Sol. I answered before that be may. God his Spirit leaving him to himself, and not affisting. Obi. Will some say, what then, is every private Believer able to determine the truth of God in all things? I answer, There are some Propositions of truth, not necessary for us to believe one way or other in order to our Salvation, or according to which we are not obliged to any practice & But as to all Propositions of truth, necessary to be believed, or to be known in order to any practice of ours, which is to be founded upon them; Every true Believer (Supposing the ordinary affiftance) of the Spirit of Christ & use of means) doth or may know what is the will of Christ as to them: and this is the sense of these Scriptures.

2. It appeareth further, from the necessity of fueb a knowledge and differning in order to bis Salvation: believing, and a following of Christs voice, are things absolutely necessary to any Souls Salvation. Now it is impossible that a Soul should have a power to believe the voice of Christ if it doth not know it, and be not able to distinguish it from another. There is no true Falth in any proposition of truth but muft be the affent of the mind to it, for the Divine Anthority of it. Every affent to a Proposition is not true Faith: But when a man affenteth to a proposition of truth, because God hath spoken it, this now is divine faith; So that the Soul must know and discern the voice of Christ, or it can never believe it. It is not enough that others tell us, This is the voice of Christ, for then we affent to it because they say so. Again, to follow the voice of Chrift, is necessary to Salvation, but none is able to follow it that is not able to know, and discern whether it be the voice of Christ or no. Besides, Christ hath foretold us, that in the latter days many false Teachers should arise, and should say to some, Here is Chrift; Others, there is Chrift, Now, Supposing Belie-

vers not to know the voice of Christ, not to have an ordinary ability to difcern his voice they shall not know which way to take, whether this or that way. The Papifts indeed have found out a guide, follow the Church they cry, do as they bid you; you are bid to bear the Church. True, we are bound to hear the Church, convincing us of our fin by Gods Word: but are we bound alfo to believe as the Church believes ? to do as the Church would have us do? where's that in the Word of God? well, but suppose we did think it lawful for us to deny our selves to be reasonable persons. and to believe as others would have us, (which is yet impossible,): yet what Church should we follow? The Catholick Church in all ages (they cry.) This indeed is a reverend name, but I would fain know how many doctrines of faith, or matters of practice are thus agreed? how many Scriptures are thus expounded to us? Is it some particular Church they would have us follow? and take all the faith to be the voice of Christ? will any one fay that there is any particular Church that cannot err? if they err we may err too in following them: and I would fain know by what Scripture any will make it good, That what I do finfully in obedience to the Church, the Church not I, Shall answer for at the day of Indgment. Till that be well proved, I shall conclude, That as every Believer doth or map know, and discern the mind of Christ, so he ought to walk according to his own light and discerning.

3. Again thirdly, Experience maketh it good, That believers do ordinarily know the voice of their Beloved by the ordinary abborrence that they have of fuch Preachers, as intead of preaching the mind and will Christ, spend their times about other things, which have no foundation, no colour at all in Scripture; but are only founded in the natural filth and corruption of the Preachers hearts, in the lying vanities of Heathens, and superstitious persons. I fay, this common Sense that is found in all parts of the world amongst them that fear the Lord and walk closely with him agreeing in the despising, undervaluing, just abhorring of such vain persons, is a great evidence of this: especially considering, with that just reverence, and due affection which is found in all such persons; for those Ministers of Christ who faithfully and plainly open the Scriptures and prove their doctrines from them, and powerfully apply what they fay unto the hearts of their Hearers. That this is univerfally true, every one may observe: that it is not in a Faction and Conspiracy, to cry down a party because of

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these, or these principles, &c. is plain; for observe it where you will, where there is any understanding Christians that savour the ways of God, and walk in them, you will find this true. Let a Minister be of what parts and pretended principles he will in or ther things, if yet he makes it his business to open the mind of God seriously, plainly, spiritually, he is accepted by, and welcome to every such Soul. If on the contrary he comes to vapour with his own parts, to tell people sayings of Philosophers and Fathers, to quibble, to vent his passions, to broach Superstitions, &c. he is received by such with a just detestation.

I added further, that the Believer doth not only know the Voice of 2. Members Beloved, but he rejoyceth to bear it. It is (faith the Spoule) the Voice of my Beloved. &c. The phrase doth not only significe the Spoules discerning of her beloveds voice, but also her joy at it. From what you have already heard, you will easily understand the sense of this latter member of the Proposition in two things.

1. That in the time of Christs withdrawing from his Church, the true Believer will wonderfully prize and rejoyce at an Ordinance, where it can but hear any thing of the voice of Christ.

2. That in the time of Gods withdrawings of the gradual manifestations of his love to the Soul; the gracious Soul will much rejoyce to bear anything of the voice of God in the instances of his Spirit. I

fay firft,

1. That in a time or after some time of absence, the true Spouse, the Church of Christ, will much rejoyce to bear but any thing of the voice of Christ in bir publick Ordinances: I shall not need much to infift upon the proof of this from Scripture. It is faid, 1 Sam. 3.1. The Word of God was precious in those days, for there was no open Vifion. I am aware that that Text is capable of an interpretation into another fense: as precious fignifies rare and Jearce (as every thing precious is;) but why the proper notion of it should be excluded, I cannot tell, the word is To carus fuit. The Word of God was dear, dearly effeemed, for there was no open Vision. It was in the time of Gods absence (in this sense) from David, that he cries out, Pfalm 84. 1. How amiable are thy sabernacles, O God! God told his people, that when he should fend amongst them a famine of bearing bis Word, then Amos 8. 12. they should run to and fro to feek the word of the Lord. And Christ prophesied Mat. 22. 39. That when they should fee him no more, they should fay, Bleffed is be that comes in the name of the Lord. The time hath been Chri(Christians!) when the voice of your Beloved hathbeen so common, the powerful publick revealing the will of God to you in Pulpits, hath been so common, and so ordinary with you, that you have been even like the Israelites to their Manna, you have been ready to say, Our Souls loash this common-bread. The Word of the Lord in his Gospel hath been undervalued by you, and plain, powerful Scriptural preachings have been little set by, because it hath not been (like Exechiels bread) baked with mans dung, sancy, and strains of wit. Gospel-Sermons have been called stat and dull, and plain notions of Truth have been little regarded, New notions only in fashion.

But my beloved, if ever God turns his hand upon you, and thuts you out of his publick Affemblies, and deprives you of your spiritual Ministry, you will then learn to prize the Voice of your Beloved. The time hath been when it hath not been so much the Voice of Christ in an Ordinance, which hath pleased the wanton ears of profession, as the voice of men handsomly delivering that voice; God grant that you may never see the time, when you would be glad of the meat without such sauce: Will you know the reason why the true Spouse of Christ, especially after his absence

from them, will so rejoyce to bear bis voice? it lies,

1. In the necessity of it as a means to maintain our Spiritual being and well-being; What is the reason that a poor creature that hath been used to a delicious fare, and then despised a plain dier, yet when he comes to be in want is glad at a crust of bread, that a great Emperour offers a Kingdom for a draught of water? The reason lies in the necessary connexion which the Providence of God hath created betwixt our natural life, and the ffrength of it. and that food which God hath created proper for the bodies of men: Our spiritual life and well-being hath much the same dependance upon the voice of God in his Word, that our natural life hath upon our daily bread. God hath faid, Hear, and worr fouls shall live, and he hath bidden us, Take beed what and how me bear. The Souls spiritual life, strength and comfort depends upon the voice of Christ in his Word, I say, upon the voice of Christ in his Word. I will not fay that the Soul cannot live without bearing. The body may live withouteating. Mofes continued in the Mount forty days without Victuals. Elijab went in the strength of one meal forty days: the Soul may live without publick Ordinances. God can make up the want of them by more immediate influences.

but this is not its ordinary food : God hath bidden us to Hear for the time to come, and the Soul may live upon the Word of God which it hath formerly heard, and upon the influences of the Spirit which at fuch a time it may have, yea and expect to have from the Lord. Elijah in the time of a famine was fed by a Raven, but yet he doubtless rejoyced when the famine was gone : I say, it is the voice of Christ in his Word that keeps the Soul alive in an ordinary courfe. Every one that gets into a Pulpit doth not fpeak the voice of Christ; a man may for spend his time in preaching, that what he faith may be no more favoury and nourishing to a Soul than a dish of dirt or stones would be to his body: But betwixt a true preaching of the Gospel, a true revealing the Mind and Counsel of God to peoples Souls and the Souls growth. firength and nourishment, there is as just a connexion, as there is betwixt the life-natural and growth and ffrength of the body, and that bread which is his proper food; and it is as impossible that the Soul fhould for any time want the former, and not rejoyce at the return of that enjoyment, as that a poor creature almost flarved should not rejoyce when it hath got its matural food. To the latter a man is constrained by a necessity of nature, to the other he is compelled by his spiritual nature, and this is the true reason of it.

2. Secondly; It is as true also concerning the voice of Christ by bis-Spirit speaking to the Soul, and the reason is the very same. As our Saviour faith of bread , Man lives not by bread only, but by every word that comes out of the mouth of God : So it is true concerning the voice of Christ in his Word, which is spiritual Bread: man lives not by hearing only, but by the Spirit of God in, and by the word inftructing and making impreffions upon the heart; yea look as it is as to the body, Though bread be a great necessary of mans life, and without it the body cannot live, yet there are other higher conferving causes of the life of man. Such is the working of divine Providence upholding our faculties, and keeping up of our Souls in life. Thus it is as to our spiritual life; man liveth by the voice of Christ in his Word, not by the found of the word meerly, but by the vertue of the Word made by the Spirit of Christ effectual to the heart; yea there is an higher cause than this preferving the spiritual being, and well-being of the Soul, and that is the immediate influence of the Spirit of God maintaining the Souls-union and communion with God. Hence I fay,

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there is the same, yea a greater, reason for the Souls rejoyeing to hear the wice of Christ speaking by his Spirit, as for its rejoyeing to hear his voice in his Word; and as great a cause for the Soul to rejoyce in both especially after a time of want, as for a man that is almost samished to rejoyce at the news of bread or water, or him that hath been sick unto death, to rejoyce when he sinds within himself some recovery of strength and return of health a yea so much greater as the difference is greater betwixt the Soul and the Body, and the former is more excellent than the other. I have done with the Doctrinal part of the Proposition: I come to the

Application.

In the first place. This sheweth us the manity of the doctrine of the Church of Rome. They indeed will allow this concerning the Church. That the knoweth the vaice of Chrift; but, I. It must be their own Church meerly . The alone must be the Church , the Car tholick Church. 2. It must be the Church in their notion, not the whole body of the Church as it confifteth of Pastors and People : but the Dodors of the Church, no, nor yet all the Doctors of the Church but a Council no nor vet a Council unless confirmed by their holy Father the Poper he is Peter's Vicar forfooth, and he alone knows the voice of Christ it feems, and what he faith is the meaning of the Scriptures, or what elfe he faith, was left as a tradition by the Apostles or the Primitive Church, that the people must believe is the voice of Christ, the will of God concerning private persons, who must not discern and judg about it, nor dispute and argue it, but shew their humility in judging any Do-Grine probable that the Doctors of the Church determine, and necessary, and beyond all dispute the will of God, if once it hath been agreed to be so by a Council, if that Council be confirmed by the Pope. In conformity to this, They deny the Scriptures to the Laity (as they call them) in their own language, and impose a 100 things to be believed and done by people, as the will of God concerning them, leaving no liberty to private Christians to examine & to judg as to the things of God, and matters of their own practice. There are others, who will pretend indeed to leave to private Christians this liberty obdiscerning and judging (which indeed is the basis of the Protestant Religion) but they either grant it partially, or deny it in practice; they will grant it may may be, that every private Christian in macters of Faith necessary to Salvation, doth know, and is able to difcern and ought to judge what

what it ought to believe : But in other marters which they think indifferent, Let the private Christian judg them never so unlawful; there they will tell us that the private Christian's to follow the determinations of the Church, and to do what they call the Church commandeth them to do, and therein to flew their humility and obedience: this indeed is in words to acknowledg this truth but in fact to deny it. Surely the voice of Christ in his Word, teacheth us not only what is to be by us believed but also what in all things we are to do: and the Sout may be damned for doing amifs in any thing, as well as for believing amis: and the believing Soul is as able to know the voice of Christ as to things that are to be done, as to things that are to be believed. If indeed a Soul judgeth any thing to be indifferent, there may be an Obligation upon it to take that part which the Elders of the Church determine to be done; but to grant that a private Christian either may or must do, what the Elders of the Church conclude ought to be done by him, when this Christians own conscience tells him that the voice of Christ is otherwise, were to grant away one of the greatest priviledges of the Gospel, to make our selves the Servants of men, and to deny this great truth as to particular Souls, That Christs theep know his voice. That the Spoule of Christ knows the voice of its Beloved; and to fay with the rebellious lews, Come, let us make us Captains and return into Egypt again.

Secondly, Let this mind us all of our duty to differn the voice of our Beloved. Christ hath given unto his Saints this Talent, let them not wrap it up in a Napkin: he hath clothed us with his dignity, let us then exercise this faculty, and so discharge our duty. Luther faith, they fin damnably that do it not, they are certainly careless of their own Souls in a desperate degree that do it not. To use my former instance; you may suppose a Clerk of a Market who is no fool, but is able to try meights, and menfires, and ballances : you may suppose him in Office to do it, that it may be his place and duty, and yet he may be neglective in the discharge of his duty: fo it is with a Christian, the Word of God is the Standard of the spiritual Market. The Christian is no fool, God hath indued him as other men with a reasonable Soul, may more than fo, God hath given him the illumination of his holy Spirit; by vertue of this he is able to discern the voice of Christ from another voice; nay yet further, God bath put him in office to do it, he hath bid him prove all things, try the fpirits, though God hath referved

Christians exhorted to discern the voice of their Beloved.

reserved to himself judicium supremum. authoritativum, the supreme and authoritative Judgment concerning Truth. So that no private Christian, no Church under Heaven can judg autonesservies, so as by its determination to make an hair white or black, any one Proposition true or false. And though God hath reserved to the Elders of his Church judicium ministeriale, a power to expound, and declare the will of God universally according to his Word, and to make regular regulatare, determinations according to the Word of God; yet God hath given to every believer judicium privatum, a power and priviledg as to himself to judg concerning the voice of Christ: O let us not be unthankful to Christ for his great priviledg, but discern concerning the voices we hear, whether they be indeed the voices of Christ or no? Let us do this:

r. Concerning the voice of Christ in publick Ordinances. It was prophesied of old by Christ himself that many should come in his name, and say, Lo bere is Christ: Lo there is Christ! one should say this is truth, another that is truth. It is a Prophesic hath since that time been sulfilled every day; and is this day sulfilled. You had need stir up your spiritual faculty, Christians, that you may be able to say in this consusion of Preachers Voice, which is the voice of your beloved. You will say you are weak, and how shall you

know it?

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1. I answer, 1. As the Prophet Isaiab faid of old, To the Law and to the Testimony: if the voice agreeth not with that, there is nothing of your beloved, no light in it; it is the same that Christfaid, John 5. 40. Seach the Scriptures, &c. It is that which the Bereans did Acts 17. when Paul himself was the Preacher. Trust no mans voice in a Pulpit, let him be what he will, I fay, trust him not. You have your Bibles, fearch the Scriptures, they are night you, in your mouth : Do you hear any dictate to you fome Propolition to be believed, or fomething to be done, believe him not till you find in the holy Scriptures that God hath somewhere. commanded you to believe, or to do this thing which he urgeth upon you. Certain it is that the Scripture is perfect, and able to make you wife to Salvation, perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works, 2 Tim. 3. 15, 17. If his doctrine agreeth not with the Scripture, there is no light in it, it is the Preachers own vain vaice, it is not your Beloveds voice. But here are two Objections : , demon to the farmer which he some will hid about to

First .

First then (will some Christians say) Though the Scripture Obj contains all doctrines necessary to Salvation, yet surely we must not look to find an express Scripture for every action, which yet is our duty to do.

This is indeed what fome would make the world believe they Sol, hold, who are zealous in this great point concerning the sufficiency of the Scriptures: But if they mean by express Scripture the letter of it, I know none, saith her; But this is that which is

faid,

1. That the Lord doth set up his candle in every mans Soul, Pro. 20.27. The spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord; he hath given unto man a light of nature, by which the Heathen did the things contained in the Law: these things a Christian ought to do, though he hath not an express letter in Scripture for the thing, or at least cannot find it.

2. The Lord hath given unto us his holy Scriptures; the Candle of the Lord hath burnt dim ever fince the fall, God hath by his Scriptures recufied the light of it: hence we say, that we are bound not to do those things which the Scripture forbids, though our reason (which since the fall is corrupted) dictates the contrary to us. And we are bound to do many things commanded us in the Word, which the light of Nature will not shew

us. Such is the fanctifying of one day in Seven, &c.

3. Thirdly we say, That the Scriptures reveal the mind of God to us, and especially in matters concerning the worship of God and the affairs of the Gospel-Church, not only in the precepts of Scripture, but in the Examples of Christ and his Apostlesand Primitive Christians. The Reason is, because it was one end of Christs coming to set us an Example, and the very end of Christs sending his Apostles was, that they might be Lights to the world: and it was Christs way in the Gospel to teach us rather by Example than Precept, especially in matters of his Church; and the Apostle bids us do what we have heard, and seen in him, and to be sollowers of him, &c.

4. Fourthly, we say, That although the boly Scriptures contain not in them particular Rules for every action of our lives, yet they contain general Rules for every action: and the Christian ought to do nothing for which he hath not either a particular or a general rule; we therefore cannot own any thing as the voice of our Beloved, for which we do not see either the express letter of Scripture, or some general rule, from whence we may conclude that this or that is

our duty, especially considering circumstances: for though some actions be in adu fignato indifferent, yet in adu exercito, there is nothing indifferent, as Divines speak. But yet there is another difficulty.

Obj. 2.

Will some say, There are many things, concerning which probable Texts are produced on both sides as in the points in difference betwint the Arminians and w, and in some points in difference betwint the Papists and us: both parties urge Scripture for themselves: How now in these things shall a Christian discern who speaks the voice of his Beloved?

Here indeed is the great difficulty of a Christians Judgment, yet here God hath not lest understanding Christians without some

help.

1. The first is the considering the Analogy of faith, I mean other more clear and certain truths, and comparing the things in question with them, and considering their agreement or disagreement. For certain it is, that no truth of God contradicts another. the Christian therefore must compare firitual things with spiritual 1 Cor. 2. 19. For example, Suppose the matter in question be Gods Election; One man teacheth, that God from all Eternity knew who should be saved, and did determine the Souls that thould be faved both to the End and to the Means: Another comes and rails at the Doctrine of Election, and he quotes Scripture too, and puts another fense upon Election where it is mentioned in Scripture. Here now the Christian is at a loss; How shall he know what is the Voice of his Beloved ? Let him confider how the latter Doctrines agree with known and undoubted Truths. For example, It is undoubtedly true, That there is a God, and that this God from all Eternity did know what should come to pass to Eternity, and fo must know every particular Soul that shall be saved : How could he know it but because he willed it rifthey fay. He willed from all Eternity the falvation of every particular Soul . this is all is asked, then there is an Election of persons. Thus I might instance in many more, that then is the first Rule. If there be a doubt in any point which is the voice of Chrift, it may be thus determined . That which agreeth with the other voices of Christ, that is bis Voice: God doth not, cannot contradic himfelf. Secondly.

2. Those Dodrines which tend most to the debasing of nature, and the enalting of Christ and free Grace, are the woice of Christ. I

fay very probably, amongst differing voices, both pretending to be from Christ; that which most debaseth nature and flesh and Blood, and most exalteth Christ, and free Grace, is the voice of Christ. The ground of this rule is, because the Scripture seemeth in the whole scope of it to do these two things, viz. To take away from man all Righteon fuels, all glorying and bootting in bimfelf, all felf-trust and confidence; and to make the Lord our Righteon fiels. our Confidence, our all in all; and it feems to be Gods high and great defign to advance Christ and his own Grace. One man faith that we are born in puris naturalibus, as righteous as Adam was; that we have a power of our selves ad bonum spirituale, to that which is Spiritually good; and pretends some Scripture for it. And an other Preacheth, that we are born in a loft undone finful state, that we have no power to do any thing which is good, that without Christ we can do nothing that all our Righteonsness is in Christ &c. and this the Scripture faith. It may be he that judgeth otherwise, doth likewise produce some shew of Scripture for what he saith; and he hath fome thew of diftinctions and answers, to the Scriptures on this fide. But now the Christian in judging confiders that the whole scope of the Scriptures, is to debase Nature, and to exalt Grace; and that in the Occonomy of the Gospel, the Lord hath ordered all things in this tendency, to make the Creature nothing and Christ all in all. Hence he reasonably concludes that that Doctrine which doth fo is the voice of Christ.

3. A third rule is this, Those Dollrines which give least liberty to the flesh and the natural motions of it, are the voice of Christ: Those: which give most liberty to the flesh are not the voice of Christ. The truth of this rule depends upon this certain truth: That be who will be Chrifte disciple must deny himself. There is no Doctrine of Christ that gratifies fielh and Blood. The voice of Christ never pleads for Loofness and Liberty; but for a Crucifixion to the world, for a keeping under the body; for a mortifying the deeds of the body, for a mortifying of our Members, for a new heart and the like. Hence let who will plead for Liberty, in thoughts, words or actions, contrary to the Law of God, he speaks not the voice of Christ; yes, hereby I will know his Doctrine is not of God, though he hath wrested some Scripture to his purpose, and devised some jejune interpretation of others, to take off their edge, against him; because his Doctrine is contrary to the whole scope of the Gospel, as to the ordering of mens conversations. By Bhs

Sol.

these three rules a Christian will be able to judg concerning the voice of the Preacher, whether it be the voice of Christ or no:

2. But there is a second voice of Christ, which is from the Spirit of Christ, to the Spirit of a Christian more immediately, by way of Impression and Suggestion. This also may be dissembled, for the Devil hath also a power to make Impression upon, and Suggestions to our Spirit; and a man may have very strong inclinations of his own Spirit, which he may mistake for Impressions of Gods Spirit. But an understanding Christian, (as to these also,) will know the

voice of his Beloved; will you know how?

I answer, 1. By comparing these Impressions, Suggestions, and Motions with the precepts of Scripture; concerning the Spirit of God, our Saviour saith, He shall bring all things to your remembrance what-soever I have said unto you, Joh. 14. 26. and again John 16. 14. He shall receive of mine, and shew it to you. Hence let the child of God have never so strong an Impression, Motion, or Suggestion; if it be to do any thing which the word of God sorbids any one to do; or at least sorbids him to do under those Circumstances, and in that place and station where he is set: He cries out get thee behind me Satan; he knows it is not the voice of Christ: So if it be to leave undone, to neglect, or omit what Wthe ord of God plainly makes his duty, in his general calling, or particular relati-

on, he concludes the like concerning it.

Secondly, Whereas the voice of Christ by his Spirit, doth not only speak by way of Exhortation to compel a Soul to duty, but also by way of Consolation and Confirmation, sealing the love of God to the Soul; and whereas, the Devil and the false Prophet, and a mans own deceitful beart may also counterfeit this voice to the Soul. The Spouse of Christ understands the voice of Christ bere; the same way as before. If the voice feals a promise; the Soul knows it is the voice of Christ. The prefumptuous Soul cries peace to it felf: The false Prophet cries peace, the Devil cries peace, but none of all these confirm a promise to the Soul, they proclaim Peace but upon no ground. The Spirit of God speaks peace; but how? concluding it from a promise. He that believerb shall be faved faith the Promise: Thou believest; therefore thou thalt be faved, faith the Spirit. Thus now doth the Spouse of Christ discern its beloveds voice. But I have long enough dwelt upon this Proposition. Thus much may serve for the first part of the Spoules speech. The second yet remaineth.

Cant.

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ing in book anythic coloniagus singe their area.

4. Qu.

Cant. 2. 8.

Behold! be cometh, skipping upon the Mountains, and leaping upon the Hills.

Am come to the second part of the Spouses speech; which I call'd the Spouses discovery where I noted three things.

1. The thing discovered. It is the coming of her beloved, he com-

2. The manner of his coming described; skipping upon the Mountains, &cc.

3. The note of attention by which the calleth others to observe it. Behold 1 1 observed three Propositions from these words. 1 begin with the first of these.

Christ is coming to bis Sponse.

You may observe that I deliver the Proposition so, as that it Propositions in it these two things.

1. That although God may for a time absent himself from his people, wet he will come again to them.

2. That the time of his stay will not be long, he is upon his march, be cometh. For the opening of the Proposition I shall do these things.

In what fenfe it is true, that Christ will come to his people.

1. Qu.
How and in what fenfe he may now be faid to be coming.

2. Qu

Whence it appears, that he is coming, and that he will be shortly 3. Qu. with them.

What improvement we may make of this Notion.

In what sense it is true that, Christ is coming to bis pro-

When I opened to you the first Proposition of Doctrine which I observed from this verse, I told you that the infinite essence of God doth fill Heaven and Earth, and an infinite space beyond both (say the School-men) and according to this, God is always equally present, and with all persons, and in all places. But now this infinite essence of God is continually attended with an infinite Glory and Power, &c. which God manifesteth, both as to the degree and manner differently as he pleaseth; and as he is pleased more eminently to put forth the Glory of his Majesty in Heaven, so he is more

more respecially said to be present there, this is his Glorious presence. As to his Power it is exercised in bringing good or evil. Now in regard that mercy and goodness is the most natural work of God (having no cause at all in the Creature,) and judgment is his strange work; God is said to be present with his people, when he sheweth them mercy, absent when he exercises his Power, in bringing judgment or afflictions upon them. Now in regard evils are of several forts, some respecting the outward man: Such as Sword, Famine, Pestilence, &c. Others respecting the inward man; and those either respecting the outward means of Salvation, such as taking away his sospel; their Liberties as to his publick Ordinances, &c. Or secondly, such as respect the inward means of Grace, viz., the influences of his Spirit not necessary to Salvation. God may be said to be absent from his people, and so in a capacity to return to them many ways.

1. He may be said to be absent from them, when be gives them up into the bands of their enemies; suffers them to be numbred to the Sword, afflicts them with Pestilence, or other sore diseases, sends amongst them Scarcitie, &c. and to come, or return to them

when he removeth these putward Judgments. dest his stell .

2. As he may be faid to be absent from them, when he denieth them his Gospel, and the liberty of his Ordinances, and those outward advantages which he gives them for their Souls: So he may be said to come, or return to them when he restores these mercies and priviledges

To what hate it is were chet Chail will one to hi

to them again.

3. As he is said to be absent when he withdraweth the Gradual manifestations of his Love from them (such as are not necessary to their Salvation, for necessaries he cannot deny them;) so be may be said to return, or to come to them, when he again causeth his said to shine upon them in a way of comfort, when he returne to quicken and strengthen them unto duty against Temptations, against Sin, &c. This is the first sense in which the Proposition is true that Christ is coming.

But Secondly, Christ is not God only but God-man in one perfon, and to be considered as the Messian and Saviour of his people. And under this consideration it is partly true, partly not true that he is coming; and partly doubtful, whether he be com-

Power Sec. which God manifelieth both a to the donno gai

1. He is not coming to take upon bim our noture. In this fense it was true, when Solomon spake this in the person of the Church.

or particularly believing Soul: And there are that think the Spoule here had respect to this, and that she was in it like Abrabam, who afar off saw Christs day, and rejoyced: nor will I deny this to be part of the sense, but I do not think it the whole, nor doth it concern us, nor is the Proposition true, that he is thus caming. Thus indeed the Jews are looking still for the Messis, but their eyes will fail with looking, for be is come. Christ was he who was to come, nor is there any other to be looked for: And they also in time shall see it, when God shall give them an bears to look upon him whom they have crucified. But it is enough for me to have mentioned this sense of the Text, and to have rejected it in the

Proposition, as it concerneth us.

2. In some sense it is uncertain and doubtful whether he be coming yes or no? There is in some an expectation of a coming of Christ, 1000 years before the day of Judgment. Some expect that he should come perfonally : Others, that he shall come as a King, though not in person, yet giving a rule and dominion to his People. I know there are many Texts that are quoted to this purpose, which some understand of Christs coming in person: Others, of his coming in his Saints. Others only conclude from them, that there shall towards the latter end of the world be a more glorious time of peace and liberty, &c. I dare determine nothing in the case: nor do I think them matters of Faith, but fuch diversities of opinion, as a Christian (without practifing upon them) may fafely observe. What will be the iffue of, without further diffurbance; (as Jacob did by Josephs revelations in his two dreams, which yet proved true, Gen. 37.11.) The Scriptures brought are capable of another Sense.

3. Lasting, In some sense it is most certain, That Christ will come. He will come again to Judg both the quick and dead, John 14. 2. If Igo and prepare a place for you I will come again, and receive you unto my self, that where I am, there you may be also. The Apostle saith, that God hath appointed him to be Judg of the quick and the dead, and he must come to make good his Fathers appointment: Of this it is that the Lord speaketh by the Apostle, Jude v. 15. The Lord cometh with 10000 of his Saints, and the day of the Lord cometh as a thief, 1 Thess. 2. And again, 1 Thess. 4. 14. The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an Arch-Angel, &c., and in many other texts of Scripture. By this you casily understand in what sense even now the Proposition is true.

r: First, Although the Lord Christ may be absent from the Souls of bis people for a time, withdrawing the consolatory influences of his grace, and the gradual manifestations of his quickning and strengthening presence from their Souls: yet he will again come and comfort, and quicken and strengthen them.

2. Secondly, Though the Lord Christ may be absent from the Assemblies of his people, and for a time deprive them of his Ordinances, and their more publick liberties; yet he will come again

and make his Sion the praise of the whole Earth.

3. Thirdly, Though the Lord Christ may withdraw the protection of his Providence from his people, and give them into their Enemies hands, or otherwise grievously afflict them, yet he

will come again in ways of mercy, and relieve them.

4. Fourthly, Though the Lord Christ be personally (since his Ascension to Heaven) absent from his people; yet he will come again in person, if not before the day of Judgment (as some think) yet most certainly at that day which he hath appointed to Judge the world. But secondly, The Doctrine saith, he is coming, which doth not only imply a certain futurity, viz. That he will certainly come, but a sudden suturity that he will shortly come: and that bringeth me to the second Question.

How and in what sense it is true, that Christ is coming? That any Soul may say not only, I know be will come, but behold be cometh. May not God be long absent from the Souls of his people, and from the Assemblies of his people? May he not for a long time leave them in outward miseries and afflictions? May it not yet be a great while before he cometh to judg the world, and to

give his Saints according to their works?

I answer, In Gods Eye the time is very short. A thousand years are in his sight but as one day, saith the Psalmist; ever since Christ ascended into Heaven, God hath looked upon him as coming again to Judgment: God calls our years, and ages, but a while, a day, an bour, a moment. But though this be a truth, yet this brings but an imperse a comfort to the people of God.

2. Secondly, In the Eye of faith he is coming; Faith calleth the things that are not as if they were: it makes things present that are a great way off, for he that believeth makes not haste. The Believer eyeth the Promise, and seeth the certainty of it, and speaks of the thing that is to be done as if it were already done, and in this sense the Spouse of Christ saith, Behold 1 be cometh,

though

Qu. 2.

Sol.

2 Pet. 3. 8.

though he will not presently be with them.

3. Thirdly, Christ is coming before be be fully come; the Spouse faith no more than, Behold be cometh. Christ is then faid to be come when he is fully returned to his people, that they have the influences of bis grace, in as full a manner as ever, his Ordinances in as free a manner as ever, the covering of his Providence in as great a latitude as ever, and to be come to Judgment; when he shall break the Heavens, and come down with the Arch-Angel, and with the found of a Trumpet, &c. And now he may be faid to be coming as he in any degrees manifesteth his goodness in order to these ends. Thus when the Soul hath fate in a midnight-darkness and feen no light, and begins to fee but a little day again, to fee light at a crevice, a little peace, a little comfort, Christ is coming to it. When the Affemblies of Gods people have been wholly deprived of the Ordinances of God and the liberties of them; and God brings them some little breathings, some little refreshing, as God often gave his people under the ten Perfecutions; Christis coming, though not it may be fully come. When Christ in the dispensations of his Providence in this world, salls upon wicked and ungodly men, and judgeth them by terrible judgments even in this life, and doth good to his people. He is coming as a King and as a Judg though the fuller exercise of his Judicature, be referved unto the great Day, when he will more eminently determine who are his, and who are not. And in this fense it is most certainly true, and every Church, and every Soul may fay, be is coming: not only conclude that he shall come, and will come; but also that he will not tarry. Though in our eyes the time of a Souls defertion, of his peoples afflictions, and his not appearing for his Church may be very long; yet it shall be short indeed, compared with Eternity; yes and the time of their midnight-darknels shall not be long. They may be long before they shall be fully restored to their former enjoyments of God: but they shall not be long in great extremities, but shall see some appearances of God to and for them, which shall confirm them that the Lord will come; they shall hear the noise of his Chariots, and something of the noise of his feet, even before they fee his face; and they fully shall not be long before they shall in this sense be able to say, Behold be cometh. Thus you have the sense of the Proposition: I proceed to the third thing.

How doth this appear that Christ is coming, and that he will short- Qu. 3.

I. It appears, I. From the Promise in the letter of Scripture.

2. From the consequence, and just reason of Scripture:

1. There is a promise of his coming. The Scoffers spoken of, 2 Pet. 3.3. could fee this, they faid, where is the promife of his coming! In short, all the Promises which you find in Scripture of Gods delivering his people out of trials and afflictions, his return unto them in ways of mercy after a time of affliction, his coming. to judg the world at the last day, (of which you know the Scriptures are very full:) I fay, all those Promises make good this truth, and you shall find very many of those Promises not only securing the thing; and making it certain, but also affuring that it shall be thortly. John 16, 16. A little while you shall not fee me, and a little while you shall fee me, for I go to my father. Ezek. 16.42. I will make my fury towards thee to reft, and my jealoufie shall depart from thee : I am merciful faith the Lord ; I will not keep anger for ever. So Micab 7. 18. Lam. 3.31. His anger endureth but for a moment. Pfalm 30. 5. The rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the Righteons. Pfalm 125.3. In thort, the Promifes of this nature are very many, and various, and obvious to every Eye.

2. But fecondly, It will appear to you from the confequence and reason of Scripture, if you conclude but rationally from some principles laid down there. There are three things that the holy Scripture plentifully revealeth: all which will conclude this, and

give the Spouse of Christ a ground to conclude thus:

1. The first is, Gods special care for his people, and his howels of tender love towards them. Infinite are the expressions you find in Scripture of this nature: Cansan is called the Land which Godeareth for, &c. God expresset his affection for his people under the notion of the Love of a Father, a Mother; he is faid to delight to rest in them, to love them, &c. Hence that Soul that is the Spouse of Christ, from whom he is at present absent, may conclude that his absence will not be long. For then,

the Lord more careth than be doth for another place? what special Providence should be more exercised for them than for any other people? where should the Lords bowels and tender mercies be

more feen ?

2. Again, His peoples firits would fail before bim. Now this is not confistent with the goodness of God to suffer. God himself gives this reason, Isaiab 57. 16. For I will not contend for ever, nei-

ther will I be always wroth, for the spirit should fail before me and the sould which I have made. Hence the Apostle, i Cor. 10. 13. God will not suffer you to be sempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation also make way to assay, that you may be able to bear it: mark the last words, that you may be able to bear it. God will take care that his trials of his people shall not be above what they are able to bear, they shall be such as they are able to bear them. Now they are not able to bear a perpetual absence.

3. Neither is a perpetual absence confishent with Love: Temporary absence is it may be the product of Wildom, and very confishent with the love of a Father to bis child, of an Huband to bis Wise, of a friend to his friend; but it is not consistent with the love of any of these, having it in their power to come to their Relations, and to help them to be ever absent from them, much less with the love of God. Hence you shall ordinarily find God urging his mercy as an argument, to perswade people of the truth and faithfulness of his Promises of this nature. Ex. 16. 42. Fer.

3. 12. Micab 3. 18 &ce.

2. Secondly, You shall find the Scripture plentiful in revealing the holiness of God, and the wrath of God against wicked men, and fuch more especially as are the troublers of his people, 2 Theff. 1.6. It is a righteous thing with God to render tribulation to them that trouble you. Jude 14. 15. Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thoufand of his Saints to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly amongst them of all their ungodly deeds which theyhave committed, and of all their bard speeches which ungodly sinners have Spoken against bim. The Scripture is very full both in declaring the hatred of God against wickedness, and the vengeance of God against wicked men, especially such as he useth for Rods for his people. See Efay 10.2,3,4,5. Now this you shall observe, The wickedness of wicked men is never so exceeding great as when Christ is absent from his people, as to the iffues of his Providence; that's the time when Hell is broke loofe, when Christ is present with his people, he binds up Satan, when he withdraweth he lets him loofe again. Now hence again the Spoule of Christ, when Christ is absent from her, as to the iffues of his Providence, and gives her up to wicked profane perfons, may conclude that Christ will come. For it is not confiftent with the holiness of God to suffer heighths of profaning & blaspheming long: nor will the justice or faithfulness of God to fuffer the out-rager of wicked men long,

3: Laftly, It may be concluded, from the End of Gods offlitting of bis people. The wife God (who is the highest rational Agent) doth all things for some wife end : when he absents himself from his people, it is for some wife End. Now what is the end which the Scripture afferts of Gods afflicting his people? It is fet down in Scripture negatively, not to confume, not utterly to destroy them. but to chaftife them that they might not go altogether unpunished; To try them; To prevent their condemnation with the world, 1 Cor. 11. To make them acknowledge their offences, and feek bis face. Hof. 5. 17. He doth not afflict them either to torment and torture them ; no, he hath no delight to crush the Prisoners: he doth not grieve willingly, nor willingly offlict. Lam. 3. Now all these Ends may be obtained in a short time, and are often so attained. And by Gods perpetual absence they will not be attained; by that his people would be not chastened, but confounded, not tried, but deltroyed. God will not therefore for ever contend and absent himself; he may withdraw, but he will come again. Thus much may serve for the explication of the Proposition, and for the confirmation. I come to the Application.

In the first place, Let not the wicked then presume too far in the days of Gods dark Dispensations to his people, to triumph over them and smite them, because God is at present departed from them. It was Davids complaint, Pfalm 71. 10, 11. His Enemies |pake against bim, and they that laid wait for his Soul said, when they took counsel together, God bath forfaken bim, perfecute and take bim, for there is none to deliver bim : Mark the ground of their prefumption, God bath forfaken bim. Thus they insulted over Christ in the day when he cryed out, My God! My God! why haft thou forfaken me ? Then they crueified him, then they mocked him, and bid him let God deliver him if he would have him, bid him come down from the Crofs &c. Thus they broke Davids heart when they faid unto him. Where is thy God? Pfal- 42. 3. See how the Church gathers up her Spirits, and answers such Scoffers, Micab 7.8. 9. Rejoyce not against me, O mine Enemy, when Ifall Ishall rife, when I fit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me; I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against bim, until be plead my cause and execute judgment for me, he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteonsness; Then she that is mine Enemy hall fee it, and fame shall cover ber , which faid unto me, where is the Lord thy God? my eyes shall behold ber ; now shall

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the be trodden down as the mire of the freets. Do you difcern the Lord not appearing to the Souls of some of his people as in former times? not to protecting them by his Providence, and making an hedg about them : and do you fay (like Pharaob) when the Ifraclites were in the red-Sea, Exed. 15. 9. Now is the time. I will pursue them, I will overtake them, my lust shall be satisfied upon them, I will draw my fword, my band shall destroy them. O take heed what you do, Christ is coming again, though the Sun be fet, it will rife again. It was a foolish practice and presumption of that wicked fervant in the Parable, Matth. 24. 48. when he faid in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming to begin to smite his fellowfervant : what faith our Saviour ? The Lord of that fervant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an bour that be is not aware of, and shall cut bim afunder, and shall appoint bim bis portion with the hypocrites, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. O take heed of prefuming to afflict the people of God in the day of

his absence from them! For God will not be long absent.

Let the Saints be encouraged in the day of Gods for faking them and their Assemblies, not to forsake and depart from God. The day of forfaking is a day of great Temptation. God trieth his people really by the iffues of his Providence, and the Devil will be buffe in that day, either by immediate Suggestions, or by evil Instruments to bid the Soul now leave off God, and thy profession to God and to his ways. Ordinarily this is one of the Devils arguments, concluding from the present absence of God, and his present sad dispensations to his eternal absence. And such thoughts as these are too apt to arise in our hearts and to be temptations to us to Apostate from God, either in principles or practice. To what purpose should I adhere to this Principle, or to this practice or course? God hath left it, he will never own fuch a people more. Oh! take heed, Christian! Let not these thoughts prevail upon thy Soul, remember this, that Christ will come to his Spouse: yea, be is coming, he is absent it may be, but he will come, he is coming. They are foolish servants and children, that because their Father or Master is stept out of the house at present, conclude he will never come in, and therefore neglect their work and fall to idleness; The foolish child will indeed do so at School sometimes, but he is whipped foundly for it when his Master comes in. Christ will foundly whip those Scholars in his School that fall to idleness, and leave their work assoon as he hath but turn'd his back

upon them. Otherwise, though you may discern our Lord and Master gone out of his house, out of his family, and School: yet as the certain knowledge which the children have, that their Master will by and by come in again, and which the children and servants have, that their Father or Master will by and by come in to his house again, keeps every understanding child and servant in awe, that although their Father or Master be absent; yet they keep their stations and attend their work: so let this certain knowledge that you have that Christ will return again to his forsaken Church and people, keep you in awe while he is absent, that you be doing the work, and keeping close in your station, waiting for

him in the way of his Judgments.

Let what you have heard reftrain you from unwarrantable propheeving to your felves the day and bour of Christs coming. That he will come is most certain, and that it will not be long, both these things are clear enough. But (faith our Savour) Of that day and bour knoweth no man: For any Christian to conclude, that God will fend him peace, quickening, frengthening influences by fuch a time : that God will come to refcue his Church or any part, by fuch a time, that Christ will come to raign or judg the World by such a time; I know no ground for this, God hath in Wisdom hid particular times and feafons from us, that we might be always obferving, and watching believing and waiting, and praying. Sometimes you shall find in Scripture God revealing the particular time when he would come, and help and deliver his people: but you shall observe, that he always signified it by a special Messenger; either sent some Angel, or stirred up some Prophet, to whom he did immediately reveal it. For ought I know (the fecrets of the Lord being Pfalm 25. with them that fear God.) God may reveal fome fuch things: but certainly though to others they may be matters to ponder upon and observe, yet they cannot be obtruded upon them as matters of Faith, because there can be no fufficient evidence to another, that the Revelation is divine. A man may have a true impression with such evidence as may be sufficient to create an extraordinary, perswasion in him that hath it; but I fay, he cannot make his evidence clear unto another. Take heed therefore of reckoning without your Hoft, 'tis a prescribing to him that knows his own time best: And very often these flattering hopes founded on these incertainties, when they prove frustrate, do much fink the Soul, and cause in it desperate conclufions of unbelief. Laftly,

Use 3.

Lastly, Will Christ come? w be coming? Oh let not the Ser- Use 4. vants of God then in any time of forsaking, despond, and conclude Christ will never come to help his people, never Comfort, never Strengthen, never Rescue them. Take heed of this, this is to give the lie to the God of truth, to say Christ will not come, when Christ hath said I will come. List up your heads then you prisoners of hope; list up your heads, and rejoyce in all your dark hours, the day of your Redemption draweth nigh. Let not Zion say the Lord hath sorsaken, my God bath forgotten me; nor the house of Jacob say, my way is hid from the Lord, my judgment past over by my God. God may delay his coming, but he is coming; it is true wildown directeth his steps, but how slow soever his march be, it is sure.

Ab! But will Gods people say, for ought is said it may be many years, moneths, days, before be comes, threescore and ten years is to God Obj. but a while, shortly; may nothing be done to hasten his coming? are there no signs of the Son of man from which we may comforta-

bly hope it will not be long?

I answer, Gods times are set by an eternal Counsel, which cannot be altered; but for thy Comfort consider these sew things. Sol.

1. That for Christs coming in the returns of Comforting, Strengthening, Quickening, Grace, the time is seldom long; indeed to a deserted Soul, a year, a month, a day, seem very long, and possibly some particular Souls (but they are rare examples) may be some years in a deserted State; but ordinarily this time is very short, long it cannot be, for when death comes, the Soul shall go to him, if before that time or in that hour Christ doth not come to it: Besides, Christ seldom absents himself long as to all these dispensations of Grace; if he doth not quickly come to Comfort, he quickly comes to strengthen; if he removes not the Thorn in the stess, his Grace shall be sufficient for thee.

2. As for Christs coming to Judgment, though there may be many years to it, yet they shall not seem long to thee, for yet a little while, and thou shalt rest in thy bed in the Grave, and after that the time shall not seem long to thee, when thou awakest than

Malt be fatisfied with Gods likenels.

3. As for Christs coming to lave, deliver and rescue his people; though it be long, yet it is a great Comfort to Gods people, that is shall be. How chearfully did the Saints of the Old Testament live and die having not received the promise? Heb. 11.39. v. 13. they saw them after off, and were perspeaded of them, and imbraced

sbem:

them; could they live and die comfortably being perswaded, that though Christ was not yet come, to purchase mans Redemption, yet he should come; though the Spirit were not yet poured out, yet it should be poured out; and shall not we live and die Comfortably, being perswaded God will save and deliver his Church, though our eyes shall not see it, but we like Moser must die in the Wilderness? But yet in regard we have so much unbelief in us, let me add two or three Signs of Christs speedy coming in this last sense.

1. It is an excellent Sign of Christ's coming, when his people accept of the Punishment of their iniquity in his absence. One end of Gods withdrawings, is, that his people may acknowledg their offences; when you see a people under Gods withdrawings, humbling themselves, and lying low before God, as sinners justly punished, and accepting the punishment of their Sin; conclude that God is not far off, you know the promise Levit. 26. 41, 43.

2. It is an excellent Sign, that Christ is soon coming back to his people, when he leaves them not for some Spiritual debauchery, and in the time of bis absence, they are found keeping close to him; when God leaves a people for a Spiritual Whoredom, corrupting his Ways and Worship, it is often very long before he again comes to them, this was the case of the Tews; but when God (as to his Providence) leaves a people, zealous for his Glory, and walking closely with him and searching further after his ways; it is a good Sign, that his great end is tryal of them, and if in the time of his withdrawings he finds their hearts stedfast and unmoveable, it is feldom long before he returns again unto them: Give me an example of any people under Heaven, not eminently debauched and corrupted, as to matter of Doctrine, Worship or Life, whom God left long as to the presence of his eminent Providence. It is but a crude and sudden Notion, and therefore I shall only throw it amongst you to be studyed : Though many times for leffer Spiritual wickednesses, Omissions, Pride, &c. God may withdraw bimself for a time from the Souls of his people; yet he seldom long withdraws himself from the assemblies of his people any long time, but for some emineut Corruptions, in his Truths and Worship, or for some eminent Formality and Hypocrify, and Apostacy in Conversation.

3. It is an excellent Sign that Christ is coming, when his enemies are at the highest, and his people are at the lowest. God was never so night to the Salvation of the Israelites, as when Pharaob was highest.

and the people were lowest. It is written, in the Mount of the Lord is shall be feen : It is nearer day when it is midnight. It is then time for Love to work or never; his enemies then are ripeft for judgment, his people are then fitteft for mercy, and God drives both these designs of judgment and mercy, when he thus cometh to

his people. I will add but one thing more.

4. An earnest praying Spirit in the bearts of Gods people, is an excellent fign that Christ is coming, Pfal. 10. 10. God first prepareth the heart, and then be causeth bis ear to bear; you see this in that eminent prayer of Daniel, Chap. 9. at the very nick of time, when God was coming, when his Chariots were ready. A mighty Spirit of Prayer pierceth the Heavens, and bringeth God down; it is the wind upon the wings of which he is pleased to ride. A dead heart to Prayer in Gods people is a Sign that Christ is a great

way off.

5. I might add another, though not fo certain, a ftrong confidence and expediation in Gods people, is a fign that Christs coming is not far off: It is true that for particular times and scasons we have no particular promifes, and therefore these confidences cannot be a Divine Faith firictly fo called; but there are general promifes enough. Now God often, when he intends to haften a mercy, doth create extraordinary confidences in his people; of which as to the particularities, possibly they can give no reason, only they have strong Impressions: Now though such Impressions ought by no means to be foundations for Christians to act irregularly upon, yet they are often prefages of Christs coming, and may be begotten in the Souls of Gods people by himself; by vertue of that word, Pfal. 25. The Secrets of the Lord are with them that fear him. But it may be not with standing all I have faid through the unbelief that is in Christianshearts, they may be doubting whether he will come at last or no; or at least, whether he will come so shortly or no: They see many hindrances, many difficulties in the way, &c. I shall therefore help the weak Christian over these sensible blocks in my next exercise where I shall handle the second Proposition from the second part of the Text.

That Christ when he cometh to bis Spouse, will come skipping upon the Prop. Mountains, and leaping upon the Hills. What is meant by Chrifis coming, and in how many fenses he may be said to be coming. you have heard under the former Doctrine; here I have two

things to inquire for the explication of the point.

What:

Signs of Christs coming.

200

1: Qu.

1. Qu.

What is meant, by the Mountains and by the Hills?

ing skipping upon the Mountains, &c. Then I shall come to the proof of the Point, and so to the Application.

What is bere meant by the Mountains and the Hills?

There is a strange variety of interpretations in giving the sense of this expression: I do not intend to trouble you with them, they are most of them so apparently strained, and to be justified by no paralel Scripture. A Mountain and an Hill only differ in quantity, both of them are terra elevate, a portion of the earth raised up above the other part: When this is a greater portion, we call it a Mountain, when lesser we call it an Hill. Three things are to

our purpose observable concerning Mountains.

1. They are higher than other parts of the earth; this is effential to a Mountain: hence he that is upon a Mountain seeth surther and more than he that is in a Valley; and when the Devil would show Christ all the Kingdoms of the world, he takes him up into a Mountain, Match. 4. 8. and Rev. 21. 10. when the Angel was about to show Saint John the holy City, he carries him unto an high Mountain: hence sometimes in Scripture people, that are high in their own opinion, or high in wordly dignity, are by a metaphor compared to Mountains, or resembled by that Notion, 1/2.12.814.

14. The day of the Lord shall be upon all the high Mountains, and upon all the hills that are listed up; this was expounded v. 12. Upon every one that is proud and losty, and upon every one that is listed up, and thus Lud. de Ponte expounds the Text; he comes leaping upon the Mountains, triumphing over proud Greatures.

Sccondly, In regard of the beighth of the Mountain he that is upon, it is more conspicuous, easily seen, than he that is in the valley; yea and he more easily seeth what is beneath him: in this sense it is true, and into this sense divers interpret it. Christ is upon the Mountain, where he seeth all the world, and all that is done in it; and when he comes to his Spouse, he will come like a man that cometh upon the Mountains, so that every eye shall see him, and shall be able to say: Losthis is my God, I have maited for him!

Lo this is my God, I have waited for him!

But Thirdly, The Mountain, and Hill in regard of its elevation, and being raised from the other part of the Earth, is a great impediment to our local motion; nothing more hindereth the motion of a Traveller, or the march of any Army, than a Mountain, or

many

many Hills do, and fo these notions of Mountains in Scripture do fignify impediments and difficulties, yea the greatest difficulties imaginable : let the difficulties be little or great, more or lefs, they are fet out under the notion of Mountains and Hills. Thus the learned Mercer, interpreteth the Text: Nibil eum remoratur, nulla Mercer ad toe. locorum retardat difficultars and that this is no strained notion of the Metaphor, I shall thew it you in other Texts of Scripture. If, 40. 4. 2. The voice of him that crieth in the Wildernels, Prepare you the way of the Lord, make streight in the difert a path for our God, every Valley shall be exalted, and every Mountain and Hill shall be made low. and the crooked shall be made streight, and the rough places plain. Every remora, every difficulty shall be removed. If, 40.11. And I willmake all my Mountains a way. Zech. 4.7. Who art thou O great Mountain, before Zerubbabel, thou halt become a plain. So here Christ is faid to come leaping upon the Mountains; that is not with standing all real or feeming difficulties, lets and impediments, he will despife them all and trample them all under his feet; be they more or fewer, greater or leffer. Mountains or Hills he will come leaping upon the Mountains and ekipping upon the Hills : But,

What is the meaning of those terms, leaping and skipping?

The terms both fignify one and the same thing; they fignify

three things.

1. The motion of one that maketh bafte, he that cometh leaping, doth not come creeping, he goes fatter then he that goeth but a foot-pace. Christ will make hatte to bis Spoufeshe will make hafte to vifit their Souls and to vifit their Assemblies again, though he may for a time in wisdom and justice withdraw himself: He will make hafte to Judgment, though for a time he be gone from us; but con-

cerning this I spake the last day.

Secondly. The terms fignify the motion of him that hath good will in his way; as we fay, that doth not only come with speed, but comes with great alacrity and obearfulnes; he goes from them flowly, is loth to depart, and doth as men do that drag one foot after another : he knows not how to leave them, Hof. 11.8. How shall I give thee up Ephraim! bow shall I deliver thee I rael! how shall I make thee as Admab bow shall Ifet thee as Zeboim ! mine beart returned within me, my repentings are kindled together, I will not execate the fiercenels of my anger, &c. God finds a great deal of difficulty to leave a Soul in which he hath delighted, to forfake a people for whom he hath cared; How Mall I do it (faith he ?) my bears, is

furnid; my repentings are kindled; he gives a Soul many a warning first, and he gives a people many warnings, and when he doth remove, he removes by steps and inches: First, takes away their temporal blessings, then their Spiritual mercies; first one mercy and then another, he creeps as it were away from them; but when he returneth he cometh skipping upon the Monatains and leaping; the former was a strange motion, this is his natural motion,

this is that wherein he delighteth.

Thirdly, The terms fignify the motion of him that maketh a light matter of his fourney; or any letts or bindrances, which he may meet with; he that cometh skipping and leaping makes nothing of his way. Thus again Christ cometh skipping apon the Mountains; though in his motion to his Spouse, there may be many things that may feem to let and to hinder, yet when he sets out in his way of mercy they shall all be nothing unto him, he will contemn and despite them all, and let all the world know that they are nothing before him, that they shall none of them hinder his Counsel, design and purpose, but that he will bring forth his work; he will come leaping upon the Mountains. For the further opening of this, all the bindrances that I can fancy may be reduced to two Heads.

1. The Creatures Sins.

2. The Arm of fl. fb; or the Creatures Art or Strength.

First, His people's Sins; these indeed are the only real hindrances, here his own juffice hinders, the juffice of God, coming in a way of mercy to his people; he stops at the Mountain of Sins, mercy would move but justice makes a stop: Whether this proceedeth from the nature of God or from the will of God, is not much material to our purpose: Let it be whence it will it is a great Mountain in Gods way, If. 59. 2. But your iniquities have Separated betwixt your God and you; and your Sins bave bid his face from you that be will not bear. God cannot reconcile his justice to his mercy, in coming to a finful and wicked people; but over this Mountain will Christ come skipping, he will leap over these Hills. If Christ should never come to his people till they were without fpot of wrinckle, he should never fee their face till they came in Heaven; although therefore the Sins of his people separate him from them, and make him for a while to hide his face from their Souls ; yet fuch is his love and goodness, that even these Mountains and Hills shall not always be in his way : you have an excellent Text to this purpose, Fer. 50. v. 17. you shall find God lamenting his people; Ifrael.

Wrael, (faith the Lord) is a feattered feep ; the Lions have driven him away, first the King of Asseria, hath devoured him, (vis. the ten tribes) and last this Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, bath broken bis bones. Therefore, thus faith the Lord of hofts, the God of Ifrael, Behold! I will punish the King of Babylon, and his Land; as I have punished the King of Affyria; and I will bring Ifrael again to his babitation, and be shall feed on Carmel and Boshan; and bis Soul shall be fatisfied upon Munt Ephraim and Gilead. Oh! but Ifrael is a finful people! how can God do this? mark v. 20. Inthose days and in that time (faith the Lord) the iniquity of Ifrael shall be fought for, and there shall be none, and the Sins of Judah, and they shall not be found. No; that's strange, that there should be any people of the earth amongst whom Sin (though fought for) shall not be found; how comes this? mark the next words; I will pardon them whom Ireferve. Methinks the Great God of Heaven and Earth, is fet down there as a great and merciful Prince; who hath fome fubjects that hath committed fome great offence, as Treafon, &c. The Prince in point of Justice and Wisdom cannot spare them all; he takes away the lives of some: To the rest he grants a pardon; and makes their offences as if they had not been: Or, it may be as to fome fingle person amongst them, he for a while claps him up in Prison, or takes away a part of his estate, and then proclaims his free pardon. So doth God; Child of his or a Church of his hath grievously abused his or their mercy; the Lord in wisdom and justice, and for example fake cannot let them go altogether unpunished she is therefore pleased as to a particular Soul to hide his face from it it walks. in the dark and feeth no lightsit wants the Comforts the quickenings, the strengthenings of his Spirit of Grace, its bones are broken, its peace is loft its Comforts are departed for a time; but then the Lord hath pity upon the poor Creature, and though he yet be full ofSins yet the Lord comes skipping upon the Mountain of its Sin; and it shall not hinder his returns of Mercy. So it is for his Church, they have been wanton, they have abused their Liberties and Mercies. The Lord withdraweth his Providence from them gives them up into the hands of their enemies, takes a way his candletticks from them and leaves them without their Gospel-mercies; but at length he remembers his mercy, and though yet they be found a finful! people, yet he comes to them skipping over that Mountain, and leaping over those Hills. The Ifraelites were a finful people, when the Lord brought them out of Egypt, how teachy were they Dd 2. with:

with Moses? how soon do they fall to Idolatry? how frequent were their murmarings? but God came to them leaping over the Mountains. When the Lord delivered his people out of Babylon, they were a most sinful people, Ezra 9. 2. They had not separated themselves from the Heathen. They had taken of their Daughters for themselves and for their Sons; so that the whole seed was mingled with the people of those Lands; yes the hands of the Princes and rulers were chief in it; yet the Lord came skipping upon the Mountains to them &c. And God is the same God till, this he hathdone, and this he will do.

2. A second Mountain is the Arm of flesh by which I mean all obstacles that the Creature can lay in Gods way; I might indeed have better called it. The Mountain of Creature-bindrances. For the Devil as well as the men of the world, make up this Mountain. The Devil is called the Prince of the Air and the God of the world; it is his great work to hinder the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, both to the Souls and to the Assemblies of his people. And he doth not work only by his own immediate power, but fets the men of the world on work. It was he that imployed Hered to hinder Christ in his coming to the work of mans Redemption; and in Obedience to his Suggestion, it was that Herod sent and killed all the young Infants from two years old and upwards; hoping to have hindered thereby Christs moving further to the business of mans Redemption. Gods great works in coming to deliver his Spouse have met with great difficulties : Pharaob was a Mountain in Egypt, he and all his people were as Mountains and Hills; the Nations of the Heathens were all as fo many Mountains in the Ifraelites way to Canaan. The King of Babylon was a great Mountain in Gods way, when he was coming to his ancient people the Jews there. But the Lord came leaping over these Mountains, he made Pharaob willing to let the people go, by ten Plagues one after another; and at last causeth the Sea to swallow up him, and his people; he gives the King of Babylon into the hands of Cyrus King of Perfis: fee that excellent Text Pfal. 2. 2. The Kings of the earth fet themselves and the rulers take Counsel together against the Lord and against bis anointed &c. How shall God get over this Mountain? v. 4. H: that fitteth in the Heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derission, v. 6. yet bave I set my King upon my boly hill of Zion. Lo. how he cometh skipping upon the Mountains! To fum up all in thort, See Rom. 8. 38. For I am per waded that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things prefent, nor things

things to come, nor beighth, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able so separate me from the Love of God which is in Jesu Christ. When Christ cometh to the Spouse, all the Devils in Hell, all the principalities and powers in the world, cannot hinder, no Creature shall keep him and his Spouse as funder, he breaks through all, and cometh leaping upon the Mountains. I have now opened the Proposition: I shall briefly shew you the grounds of it.

First, the Lord Christ is clothed with an omnipotent power; he as well as the Father is the Lord God almighty. All power is committed to him in Heaven and earth; he that denieth this must deay the divine nature of Christ, for allowing him to be as the Apostle calls him God over all blessed for ever, the Almighty power of God must belong to him. And if this doth belong unto him then all Lets or Hindrances signify nothing to him, he can if he please come leaping upon those things which in our eyes look like Mountains.

But Secondly, That the Lord Jesus Christ never comes out to his Spouse, but he comes in pursuance of a fixed eternal purpose, in performance of a faithful promise; and Lastly, in and for the demonstration of a most ardent Love and Affection: Let me but

open these three a little.

I fav first Chrift never comes to bis Spoule, but be cometh in purfuance of an eternal purpofe. There is nothing that is done in the world, but an eternal thought ordered it, and it comes to pass according to the Counsel of an eternal will, and an unchangeable purposes now observe, what-ever a man purposeth to do, if he altereth not his purpole, and hath sufficient power, he most certainly doth whatever standeth in his way. God hath set down in his dooms-daybook all the affairs of the world, when fuch a Soul shall walk in the dark and see no light, and when Light shall shine upon it in obscurityshow many years his people should serve their enemies and be in a strange land, and when, what day they should be delivered; and when-ever Christ comes to help and fave his people, he comes in pursuance of this purpose: It is written in the volume of Gods book that be should come, and lo he cometh. No wonder if he cometh skipping upon the Mountains when he cometh for he cometh cloathed with his Fathers Almighty power, and he cometh to fufill his Fathers purpose which must stand. The purpose of the Lordmust not be altered.

Secondly, Christ never comes to his Spouse; but it is in the fulfilling of a faithful promise. There is, 1. an evernal purpose; by this God from all evernity hath set the order of things in the

world

world, 2. A Faithful promife, where God by his Word hath feenred some good things to his people, which he from eternity purposed for them. Now God by his Providence brings this purpose to pals, and gives a being to this promise; when-ever Christ in the way of his Providence comes to his people, it is the fulfilling of fome promise: The word of the Lord is yea and Amen, Heaven and Earth shall pass away before one title of his word shall pass away. It is true Gods promifes are made without limitation of time, which makes us often fail through unbelief, and fay either as those scoffers, where is the promise of his coming? or as the Pfalmist. Doth bis promise fail for evermore? But the promises of God are true and faithful they are Tea and Amen; and when the time cometh they shall have their most certain being, and accomplishment. Now Christ never comes to his people, but he cometh to give a being to fome promife; and no wonder if no let, no hinderance can fland in his way, when he comes to make known himfelf as a God of Faithfulness, who cannot lie nor repent,

3. Lastly, His coming is always to evidence ardent Love and affelion. There is a strange force in Love, which carrieth it through a Thorn-Hedg to the beloved object. Love is as strong as the grave. Facob's seven years hard service seemed to him but as a few days for the great Love which he bare unto Rachel; all distinctives seem nothing to a party that is spurred on with Love to what he doth; wisdom in sober persons restrains the evidence of this Love sometimes. So the wisdom of the Lord Jesus Christ doth sometimes cause him to bide bis sace, and not to make his love so sensibly appear to his people; but when Love hath its sree passage again, it moveth swiftly, and worketh strangely, and breaks through all impediments. Enough hath been said for the opening, and confirming of the point, I come now to the Application.

See Zech. 1.

B. Vle.

This in the first place speaks to the men of the world, not to be too consident of the Mountains and Hills thrown up in the way of the Lord Jesus Christ; when that God had destroyed the world by water there was a Generation so subtil, that they would build a Tower (forsooth) where they thought they should live out of Gods reach, as if he that before had made the waters to arise sisteen Cubits above the Mountains, could not have made it 15000 had it pleased him, but he had more ways than one; he consounds their Languages, and the samous building that should have protected

tected them, proves a Babel, a Nimrods folly, that was all. Gods time was come to deliver his people out of Egypt, Pharaob throws up Mountains in Gods way : one while the Midwives must be fet on work to kill the Males, another while others must throw them into the River, anon they must be worn out with hard labour ; he thinks all fure, Exod. 5. 2. he bids a defiance to the God of Heaven: but alas! what was this Mountain before Zerubbabel? it became a Plain. You may build a wall that men cannot climb over. but was ever any fo foolish to build a wall to keep the Birds out of a City? Oh, let not any one think to lay Mountains in the way of the Almighty! what is a Mountain to him that is able to shresh the Mountains and to make them as dust before him! But leaving these builders of Babel, I shall turn to the people of God whom

this point more properly concerns.

Secondly, Be glad then, O you righteous, and leap for joy you 2. Ufa. upright in heart : No Mountain shall thand betwixt your God and you, no Hill shall hinder his coming to you. I observe that God doth ordinarily when he would comfort his people under miferies make use of his Omnipotency, to do it with minding them of that, Efay 42.13. The Lord shall go forth an a mighty man, &c. ver. 15. I will make wafte mountains and bills. A Believer can hardly look out toward the fulfilling of any Promife, but there is some beam or other in his way: Either he feeth a Mountain of Creatureimpediments and difficulties that will hinder, and these make him cry out with Elifhab's Servant. Alas ! Maften what (hall we do! or with the Nobleman in the Kings, if God would make windows in beaven, yet how (hould thefe things be? Or elfe, he feeth the mountain of his own and others fins which he thinks must needs hinder the Promise. But oh, what comfort is here that neither of these two shall do it; not the first, because the fulfilling of the Promise is the work of the Almighties hand: not the latter, because God is Love, who when he hath chastised will pardon when he hath torn will beal, when be bath smitten will bind up. After two days (Hof. 6. 2. faith the Church,) will be revive us ; in the third day he will raife us up, and we shall live in his fight -- his going forth is prepared as the morning. The Syrians blafphemed, when they faid, that the God of the Ifraelites was the God of the Mountains & not of the Valleys, he hath low though's of God, that thinks a creature can bedge bim out from the execution of his purposes, or the fulfilling of his promises. Semacherib thought he had

had raised a great Mountain against Gods delivering of Hezekiah, when he brought that numerous Army before Hiernsalem; but God in one night, and by the ministry but of one Angel, made it all a Plain.

US 3.

What remaineth then (in the last place) but to call upon the people of God at all times to keep the eye of their Faith above the top of the Mountains? 1. Above their own fins, 2. Above all creaturedifficulties and impediments, not that I would open the door to licentious, and fecure mercy to presumptuous finners; no, this is not the bufiness I would do, I would only comfort penitent finners, and thew all, that the fins of Gods people will not always keep them under the Rod of God, though they may cause a temporary punithment, and hiding of Gods face; yet even fin itself shall not always hinder the Lords return to his people. A Christian when he hath a fure promise, is not to dispute how shall this thing be? he hath nothing to Eye but the power and faithfulnels of God: Abraham neither considered his own dead body, nor yet Sarahs dead womb, he only confidered the power-of God; when he was to offer Hage, he never puzzled himfelf with thinking: How shall I then have a promifed feed : no, he fatisfieth himfelf with this, that God was able to raife him from the dead, and what was the iffue of this faith? He received bim (faith the Apostle, Heb. 11.) Thus the three Children, Dan. 3. 17. Our God whom we ferve is able to deliver us. This faith gives glory to God, it at once gives him the glory of his Omnipotency, of his faithfulnefs, of his goodness: but Oh, how hard is it for us to see without the Spectacles of Senfe! Confider therefore,

r. That Christ when he comes to his Sponse is usually seen upon the Mountains. Abraham gave the Original to that Proverb, Gen. 22.

14. In the mount of the Lord is shall be seen; it hath been made good ever fince. I shewed you before, that when Christ came to his Spouse in Egypt he came skipping upon the Mountains: when he came to his Spouse in Babylon, he came leaping upon the Hills. This becometh the honour of the Lord our Saviour; every one can walk in a plain way, in a beaten Road. God must do new things, his honour will by it be advanced, his work more evidently

feen.

2. Secondly, Consider that it is the proper work of Faith to evidence things not seen. Sense sheweth present things, Reason concludes probable things; Faith believes improbable, and (seemingly.)

ingly) impossible things, in despight of all Sense and Reason meer-ly because God hath said them. Tis natural to the Eye of Faith to look over all matters of Sense or Reason in its way. Call not your felves Believers withhout the exercise of Faith, which must thew that you are Believers.

said it was mer if ; said the Police of the first of a merchan all la Come viese mangind of the to viles. Macromores

senion will in many had habitet salt or tollage and has solved Cant. 2. 8. 10 f. c. 1

Meissborg eligibe. Reafon tills partler three things are

Behold be cometh leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the Coming open a Monarcia, Jasper requed un Kilija a contalida E

Here remaineth yet one Propolition from this Text to be

fpoken to: It is this:

Believing Souls (or, the Spouse of Christ) in the time of his Prop .. withdrawing from them, may, and ought to behold him again returning to them. The Spoule here doth not only her felf cry out, It is the voice of my Beloved, and he cometh; but the speaks to others to behold it : Behold ! He cometh, &cc. To open the Proposition in the full compass of it, I shall shew you these three things. The select rovers

I. That Chrifts resurn to bis Sponfe after an absence may be bebeld

by a Believer. Sund sylve is bold Christ coming though as yet not fully come.

3. That it is the duty of a Believing Soul thus to behold bim:

coming.

I. That Christs return to bis Spoule after an obsence may be bebeld by a Believing Soul. I have already told you of a fourfold

coming of Christ:

1. He came in bis Incornation. Of this the Text Speaketh, but this was none of those I infifted upon : for thus we fay, not now he cometb; no, he is come and gone again. This Bernard calls a coming ad bomines. It was true of this, Abraham fam my day and rejoyced, John 8. But,

2. He cometh to his people in the influences of bis grove, to com-

fort, quicken, ftrengthen them.

man cannot fee except he halfe:

3. He cometh in the influences of his Proudence; common Peo-

4. He cometh to Judgment, and his Reward is with him to render to every one according to his work. Now it is true of all these comings of Christ: they may be seen afar off; the believing Soul sees, may see Christ coming, before he be fully come.

For the further opening of this Point: The term Bebold, being here metaphorically used, it being properly an act of the outward Senses, and here applied to the Mind, I shall open it by pursuing the Metaphor a little. Reason tells us that three things are necessary to the natural act of Bebolding: I. Visibile objectum, 2. Fa-

cultas visiva, 3. Medium visionis. So here:

r. The Soul that beholdeth must have a visible object. A man coming upon a Mountain, leaping upon an Hill is a visible object you all know. Christ is here set out to us under that notion, which is enough to let us know, that he may be beheld. There is a certainty that Christ will come; it is a true Proposition, and it is not a concealed Truth; but again and again revealed, and so an intelligible Proposition, a thing that may be known, an Object that may be understood: He that is Truth bath said it; and He cannot lie nor repent.

2. Secondly, As the Object is a visible Object, the Proposition a certain revealed Truth, and therefore may be apprehended by our understanding. So every true Believer hath a visive faculty. Let an Object be never fo vifible to the outward Eye, yet the blind-man cannot behold it; Why? because he wanteth a vifive faculty, he wanteth a power for to fee. Let a Proposition be never fo true, yet an ignorant unbelieving Soul feeth it not because he wants spiritual Illumination, he wants Faith; Christ tells his Disciples, that to them it was given to know the Misteries of the Kingdom of beaven, but to others it was not. The Disciples of Christ had spiritual Eyes they had none; but every Believer masenus a Believer hath Faith, a power to apprehend thinks that have no other being than in the revealed will of God. To fee things that are not otherwise than secured, and made certain in the Word of God. Faith is the fubftance of things not feen: and this Faith in the Believers Soul inables him to fee Christ coming before he be fully come.

Thirdly, Suppose a visible object and a vivise faculty, yet a man man cannot see except he hath a due medium or mean of Vision.

The mean of natural fight is light. Suppose things never so visible, and a man to have never so good eyes, yet in a dark night he seeth nothing, because he wanterh light which is the medium by which we see things: so it is as to the Souls beholding. Though it be a certain truth that Christ is coming, and though a Believer hath a spiritual illumination, and the grace of shith by which he is able to behold him coming, yet you must in order to the exercise of this Faith have a medium of spiritual Vision. Now the question is by what medium a Believer may foresee Christ coming,

I will open this in fome particulars.

1. A Bellever may fee Christs coming in Speculo divine nature, in the glass of the Divine Nature; if he willly confiders the nature of God, he may from thence conclude that Christ is coming. The love of God, the juffice of God, (two eminent pieces of the Divine Nature) will let a Believer, (in the day of Christs abfence) know that he is coming to it again, That Soul that thinksthat God can hide his face from his people for ever, forgets that he is love; he that well confiders those bowels of compassion: which God hath for his people, and how they are daily yerting. towards them, and rolling together for them, may eafily read Christs return to them again how can he be long from his Spouse? his people in whom he delights? how can he long withold the covering from the apple of his Eye? Chrift faith of all his Saints. of all his Churches, who is offended, and I barn not? who to feeth, not Chaifts coming in his Providence? he that feeth not Chaift coming to deliver his people from their enemies or to judge the World, and to render every man according to his work confidersnot the justice and rightconfines of God : Bu (faith the Apostic.) 2 The [1.6. a righteous thing with God to recompende tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you who are troubled, reft and peace.

2. Secondly, A Believer may behold Christs coming, in many fure and faithful Promises. This is the true medium by which the Eye of Faith discerneth things afar off, and like that God who is the Author of it calleth the things that are not as if they were. The Believer reads the Promises of God, the many Promises for his return again to the Souls, and to the Assemblies of his people, and knoweth that he is faithful that brath promises of his people, and knoweth that he is faithful that brath promises of his people, and thus feeth him coming, though as to the issues of his Providence he be yet as a contract of the Scripture is full of Promises for Gods returns to the deserted Souls of his people, or to their Assemblies when he

hath hid his face from them; or for his fecond coming to Judgment, he readeth thefe, and through this perspective seeth and be-

holdeth him coming to him.

3. Thirdly, The Believer feeth him coming in the fure words of Prophecy. Indeed under the old dispensation Believers saw Christ more coming this way than we that live under the Gospel. where Prophecy is in a great measure ceased. The lews of old time faw him coming in Types, Prophecies and Promifes. The Types which were but shadows of a Christ to come in the flesh, vanished when Christ came in the flesh. The Prophecies in a great measure respected Gods coming to his people in Babylon, and in his Incarnation; and fo far as they concerned these comings, they have their accomplishment: But there are yet some Prophecies, the accomplishment of which we wait for. I am fure there are Prophecies of Christs coming in the Clouds to Judgment, the accomplishment of which is not yet; yea, and Prophecies of Gods coming again to his Ancient people the Jews; what the book of the Revelation containeth yet to be fulfilled, I cannot tell you: that Book begins and ends with a Prophecy of Christs coming to Judgment, chap. 1.7. chap. 22. 20. And let others if they will enjoy their particular fancies : it is to me out of doubt, that in that Book under dark Prophecies are comprehended all the great affairs of the world till the day of Judgment. Now what part of them is fulfilled I cannot tell , whether that ch. II. be yet fulfilled or no is deservedly questioned, and the contrary must probably be believed. It is more than we can fay, if the 7th. Angel mentioned v. 15 hath yet founded. Now it is true, particularities concerning Prophecies yet to be fulfilled are not revealed, and many have failed in their gueffes at them : but the Believer may fee the thing in the Prophecy, though he fee not the particular circumflances of time, place and manner for the fulfilling of it. The coming of Christ to Judgment is matter of Faith to every Christian; but the particular year, month, or day is not fo.

4. Fourthly, Christ's coming to his Spouse may be beheld in the steps of bis Providence. The three former ways, the Believer seeth Christ whiles yet his Chariot is a far off; but this latter way he seeth him nearer hand even at the door. Great persons move not without some Harbingers, some that come before to give notice of his coming. The great God seldome moves towards or against people in remarkable dispensations, either of judg-

ment

ment or mercy, but he makes his Providence in some signal and remarkable acts to go before, and as it were proclaim his coming. You will say, what are those steps of Providence by which a Believer may see Christs coming? To which I answer, You may remember I told you of a threefold coming of Christ. 1. To a particular Soul in the influences of his Grace. 2. To the publick Assemblies of his people in the influences of his common Providences.
3. To the Universal Indoment. As to the first of these.

1. The best fign of it is Gods disposing and preparing of the beart for the mercy; You have it Pfalm 20. 17. Thou wilt prepare the heart, thou wilt canse thine ear to hear. When the Soul that walketh in the dark, and fees no light, discerneth God preparing the heart, that the Lord hath disposed and fitted the Soul for mercy, he may then fee Christ coming to shew him mercy. But you will fay, how doth God prepare the heart? I answer. 1. By mortifying those lusts and corruptions in it which were the cause of his withdrawing. 2. By making it low and humble, and teaching it to accept of the punishment of its iniquity. 3. By ftirring up in it a first of Prayer. I cannot enlarge upon thefe things; but let any deserted Soul observe this and he shall find it true : when God gives it to loath itself for its wantonness and back-fliding, &c. and to justify God in the hidings of his face, accepting it as the just punishment of its iniquity, and stirreth up in it an heart to pray, and to cry mightily unto God for the return of his presence, its deliverance is not far off; when he prepareth the heart he also causeth his ear to hear.

As to the second, There are signs also of Christs coming to the rescue and deliterance of his people, which we shall better understand if we consider that this Coming as it is always a work of mercy to his people, so it is ordinarily in wrath and judgment to his Enemies. I touched upon this before. I will mention three or sour steps of Providence, or Signs by which his

coming may be read.

1. The first shall be, when you see that God hath prepared his people for mercy, and suffered their Enemies to prepare themselves for destruction. The people of God are by God prepared for mercy, that's a work of Grace: when God hath humbled a people, and taught them to accept the punishment of their sins, and given them an heart to seek his sace, he is not then far off from their help. I will not enlarge upon this, for it is the same as to many with

with what I before-mentioned as to particular Souls: a Sinner prepares himself for judgment. O Israel (faith God) thy destruction is of thy self. I told you before, that ordinarily the preservation of Gods people and deliverance of them, and the punishment of the wicked are joined together; so that as the humbling and improving of the people of God under afflictions is a sign of deliverance, so the ripening of sinners is a sign to them. Give me leave to add this, that wicked mens persecution of the people of God is a kind of sin which sills up the measure of their sins: See Matth. 23.32. Fill you up then the measure of your fathers iniquities: How shall they do this? read ver. 34. I conclude then, that when you see Gods people low and humble under the afflicting hand of God, and their Enemies sullest of rage and wickedness, it is as a print of Christs feet, and signifies to you that he is coming,

and not far off from his people.

2. Prodigious dispensations of Providence is a great fign of Christ coming, and this either in a way of judgment or mercy. God uther'd in his coming to the rescue of his Spouse in Egypt, by turning their waters into blond, Sending Swarms of frags, lice, flies, murrains to their Cattel, extraordinary hall, darknefs, &c. God uther'd in his coming to his Spoule in Bubylon, by Dreams and Vilions which Daniel interpreted by a strange Hand-writing upon the wall to Belfhazzar. This is fo usual, that there hath been hardly any great dispensation of Providence in the world, tending either to the punishment of his People or extraordinary mercy for them; but his coming hath been feen beforehand in some such extraordinary and prodigious workings of Providence, by some Comets, Apparitions in the Air, monttrous productions, or the, like. It is true, these things rather signific in the general than in the particular. I say in the general, that God is doing some frange work either of judgment or mercy, and are ordinarily. figns of Gods coming to his people in ways of mercy when they have been and are in great and deep afflictions. Such things as these were mentioned by our Saviour as signs of his coming in Wrath to deftroy Hiernfalem; and they were figus of Gods coming in mercy to Gods People in Egypt and Babylon.

A third fign of Christs coming to his Spouse, by which as in a foot-step of Providence it may be forescen, is a general agreement in the faithful Prophers and messengers of God, as to this thing. Gods promises are many for the deliverance of his people in affliction

and

and they are sure; but the time, the particular time for sulfilling, not express. God of old stirred up Prophets, whom he indued with the knowledg of suture things; under the Gospel he hath a standing Ministry, whose work it is to reveal his mill unto his people; and though the Lord under the Gospel doth not so ordinarily appear to his Ministers in Visions, and give them a Spirit of Prophesty, yet he doth not use to hide from his Ministers what he doth intend to do in the world: you shall observe this, that it is a very ill sign of the Judgments of God coming upon his people, when there is an universal agreement to that purpose amongst the faithful messengers of God; and that it is as great a sign of mercy, when they are as well agreed as to that thing, viz. That the time to favour Zion is come. I put in two terms.

Glory in the title of Gods Meffengers and Prophets, that are far

enough from acquaintance and communion with God.

2. Universally agreed; for it is very possible and hath been found true in all times, that particular persons have been mistaken, both as to Mercy and Judgment; but it is not probable, and an instance cannot be given that the whole number, or greater part of Gods messengers should be missaken as to the mind of God. Though God takes a different course in revealing his mind to his people, yet he doth not use to hide from all his Abrahams, what he intends to do.

4. The last fign I shall mention by which Christs coming (in this sense) to his people may be read; is the penisence and sted assume for of bis people. I observe in the book of Judges, assoon as the Children of Ifrael were come into Cansan, God forely assisted them several times; but their times of assistance was but thort: Eight years by Cushan Rishathaim King of Mesopotamia, Judg. 3.8. eighteen years by the Moabites, v. 14. twenty years by Sistera; from whom, Judg. 4. Deborah and Barah delivered them seven years by the Midianites, Judg. 6. 1. but afterwards by the Babylonians 70 years, after that he gave them up to a total ruine from whence they are not recovered to this day. If you observe you will find that the days of their assistance as fire sign that their assistance on will not be long.

As to the third coming of Christ. That may also be beheld a-

forehand. For the figns of that I shall refer you to our Saviours own words, who professedly gives the figns of it, Math. 24. Mar. 13. Luk. 21. where you will find these given by Christ as Signs.

1. Plenty of Seducers, faying, here is Christ, there is Christ;

Math. 24.4.

2. Great commotions in the world and other Judgments of God, Famines, Pestilences, Earth-quakes in divers places.

3. Abounding of inquity, and decay of Religion, v. 12.

4. Great Security of Sinners, v. 37, 38.

5. Alterations in the course of Nature, v. 29. These and others you will find in the forementioned Text which when you see (saith our Saviour) know that the end is near. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the Angels in Heaven but the father only, --- But I have been too long in opening the first thing in the Proposition. Ishall speak a word or two to the third, and wind up the other in the Application.

It is the duty of Gods people to behold Christs coming. I shall open

it in three things.

1. It is their duty to behold it with an eye of observation, to observe the Scriptures, the Promises and Prophesies of it, Dan. 9. 2. I Daniel understood by Books the number of the years whereof the Lord had spoken. God hath therefore in his word recorded his mind that we might understand it; whatsoever is written is written for our instruction. It is the preface of the Revelation, Chap. 1. 3. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this Prophesy; and keep those things which are wrote therein.

2. It is their duty to behold it with an eye of Faith. The object of this eye is the fure Word of God, and it cannot look a jot beyond that. It is our duty fixedly to believe, Christ will come to refere his people; that he will come to comfort, quicken and strengthen his peoples Souls; that he will come to judgment; but that he will come, by this or that time, in this or that year, this is not matter of Faith, because this is not revealed in the word of God.

3. It is their duty to behold it with an eye of Hope; the Soul useth the eye not only to behold a precious thing, but to look out for a thing that is matter of expectation; and Hope is our duty as well as Faith: Faith affures us the thing, Hope waiteth for the accomplishment of it, Pfal. 42. 11. Why art thou east down, Q my Soul? (faith David) hope still in God.

2. Memb.

I take the term behold to contain all these things: Now you shall find this term Behold and equivalent terms to it ordinarily prefixed to Christs coming, Rev. 16. 15. Rebold. I come as a Thief, Rev. 22. 7. Behold I come quickly, Rev. 21. 3. Behold I make all things new, Rev. 17. Behold he cometh with Clouds Luk. 21. 28. Look up and lift up your Heads, for your redemption draweth night; with many other such Texts which I sorbear to mention. I have nothing to do but in a word to apply it.

Is it our duty to behold Christs coming. Let us then fulfill it; let us look out, and in the time of our beloveds absence, by this Spiritual eye see him coming, skipping upon the Mountains and leaping upon the Hills; let us believe and wait, and observe. Search the Scriptures for the promises, believe them when we find them, wait for the sulfilling of them, diligently observe passages of Providence tending to it. 1. I will use an argument in the case. 2. give some particular directions. The Argument I shall use is from the Advantage of our beholding: a double or trebble advantage I shall mention.

1. It will be an advantage to our Faith; I mean to the exercise of our dependance upon God. Faith of affent to the Proposition, prepares the Soul for saith of affiance and dependence. The Israelites affenting to the truth of the Proposition which Moses brought them, that God would deliver them, prepared them to depend upon God: So in all cases.

a It will be an advantage to our Patience. In a time of Temptations, Patience is a Christians great duty, James 1.4. Now this beholding Christs coming doth naturally cause patience in the Servants of God under their sharp trials of affliction; mark how the Apostle therefore present patience upon this very account, James 5.7, 8. Be patient therefore, Brethren, unto the coming of our Lord. Behold, the bushandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth; and bath long patience for it, &c. Be you also patient; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

3. It will be an advantage to your comfort, Luk. 21.28. Lift up your heads for the day of your redemption drawerb nigh. This is to plain it needeth no explication.

4. Lastly, It will be an advantage to your Holiness, 1 Pet. 4.7. But the end of all things is at hand, be you sober and watch: see Phil. 4.5. Let your moderation be known unto all men, for the Lord is at hand. Be careful in nothing, &c. so Rom. 13. 12. The day is at hand.

band, let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. That Christian were a base Apostate indeed, that being a Turkish slave, should renounce Christ when he knoweth that his ransome is coming, his redemption nigh, &c. But you will say in the last place; how should we behold, and see Christs coming? I told you before the medium by which he is to be seen. To apply it shortly.

1. Sit down, and taking a prospect of the world, meditate of the nature of God; as a pure and holy and just God, and as a gracious and loving Father, and say thus to thy self: Will God indure his Children to be always in darkness; the apple of his eye to be always grieved? can a loving God bear this, or can a just God indure the aboundings of iniquity, and the blasphemies of sinners always?

2. Sit down and study the Scriptures, the promises, the prophesies not sulfilled, and say thus with thy self, is not my God truth itfelf, faithful to his word and promises? must not these words of God be Tea and Amen, and have a being one day as well as others?

3. Observe Gods providences. The Psalmist, Psal. 107. v. 7. saith of these, whoso observes these things is wife, and he shall see the Salvation of the Lord. Matters of Providence, that are extraordinary in works of nature, are Gods signs; it is true, 'tis hard to make a particular judgment of them, till time makes the interpretation. Observe them, but take heed of being too hold to determine particulars upon them. Judicial Astrologers are too insolent in this thing. I shall only mind you of what I said before, That to Gods people in prosperity they are usually signs of great Judgments to come upon them for their Sins; To Gods people in assistion and adversity, they are usually signs of Gods coming in great mercy. And so much shall serve both for this Doctrine, and for this Verse.

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band. Becareful to Rebruy, &c. 10 Room 13, 12, 20 day to as

die groundstraf and

Cant. 2. g.

My Beloved is like a Roe and a young Hart; behold he standeth behind our wall; he looketh forth at the window, shewing himself through the Lattest.

"HE Spoule yet continueth her speech in the preceeding verse: the differend her beloved coming, with speed and chearfulnels, trampling under foot all obffacles and impediments, and leaping over them; and with relation to that doubtless it chiefly is, that the here compareth him to a Roe and a young Hart : I noted to you before that the Roes and Harts are, 1. very fwift Creatures. 2. very amiable and loving Creatures; fo that this refemblance of the Lord Jesus Christ doth either signify the Spouses Faith in Christs speedy coming unto her. Or, 2. Her Love and delight in bim, or his Love and delight in her. In which fense soever of the two you take the words. I have heretofore spoken to it, and shall not take up that discourse again. I think the former is most propers by the eye of faith the had feen her beloved coming, and making halte to her help, and for his swiftness in coming discerned by the eye of her Faith, the here elegantly compareth him to the Roe and to the young Hart yet not without respect to the other notions for Christ always appeareth lovely to the Souls of his people, and especially in the day of his return to them. But I fay I shall not south that paffage, which gently handled, can afford us no other notions of truth, than I have already from some of the foregoing verses largely discourfed amongst you. I proceed therefore to the other three, of which the Text is made up: Behold, he ftandetb bebind the wall , be looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself abrough the Latteffer; where you have, I. A note of Attention or Observation, AJA Bebold: 2. The thing to be beheld.

1. His place and posture; his place was behind the wall [he was not yet come into the house] his posture was standing the standers behind the wall; he is behind his Spouses wall, or as to his Spouse like one behind a wall, but he rester not there, he keeps the motion of one yet not at rest, he standers.

Ff 2

Secondly,

Secondly, You have the actions of ber beloved; he looketh, he hewerb bimfelf, a medium of both thefe is expressed under the metaphorical notions of windows and Latteffes. They are all three Metaphorical expressions, and for the understanding of the sense we must first consider the most proper, and natural deduction of

the Metaphor.

1. He flandeth behind our wall; he that standeth behind the wall, is nearer than he who is only feen at a distance leaping upon the Mountains, but yet is not so near as he might be: the wall is a partition betwixt us, and him that flandeth behind our wall. expression then doth signify a nearer degree of Christs approach to his Spouse; and yet such a state wherein the Spouse hath not a full communion with him. But it is not faid that he fits there, no. he stands there waiting upon the Soul, and ready yet to come nearer to it, and to injoy in it a fuller and further degree of manifestation of his Love.

2. He looketh forth, at the windows or Casements. 1. Its Buxtorf's observation that this word T's bis used only here in Scripture, and in Pfal. 33. 14. where it is applied to God, and translated be looketh upon the afflictions of his people, and in If. 14. 16. They that fee thee shall narrowly look upon thee; this makes me apt to think thatthe Translation had been better, He looketh in at the windows; as one that cannot get into a place, and yet is very curious to observe and know what's done in the house, gets to a window and prieth in there to fatisfy his curious eye. The feventy interpret it ; Taggataray Sid ray Sveifur ; and thus the fecond Phrase signifies Christs curious observation of the state and behaviour of his Spouse, in the time of his withdrawings from it.

The third phrase is showing bimself at the Lattesses; not wholly concealing himself, nor yet fully revealing himself, but giving his Spoule a glimps and imperfect fight of his Glory: they fee fomething of him, but it is like the fight of a friend at a window or. Lattels, not a full perfect and glorious fight, Ind Tor Survive, fav the Septuagint, by or through the nets; yet even that fight is a glorious Sight. The word in the Heb. fignifieth flourishing P'Y. The least glimps of the light of Christs countenance, is beautiful and glorious when he looks but out at a Lattefs, that fome things hinder the Spoules full and perfect view of his Glory and Excel-

lency, yet the fight is Glorious.

The words without any firaining afford us three Propolitions.

1. That

1. That the Lard Fefus Chrift, (as to his Spoule) doth fametimes fand behind the wall.

2. That white he standeth behind the wall, he will be looking in at

the windows.

2. That Christ ofi-times (hews himfelf flourishing through the Latselles : Of thefe in their order.

That the Lord Jefus Chrift, (as to his Spoule) doth sometimes

stand behind the wall.

1. I will thortly give you the more general fense of the Proposition.

2. I will enquire what those walls are behind which Christ stands.

and when Christ may be faid to be behind the wall.

3. Why be sometimes takes up bis place but bebind the wall ?

4. What is the duty of the Spoule towards Christ standing behind the wall, and what other use may be made of the Proposi-

tion. As to the firft,

1. The Proposition signifies in the general the different manifestations of Christ to his Spouse. Sometimes he is further off. formetimes he is nearer to the Souls of his people: Sometimes he is at a quiet reft, and in full Communion with her. The Spoule fometimes feeth him afar off upon the Mountains: fometimes it feeth him nearer, as it were under her wall : fometimes he is in the house with her, and she is in the fullest enjoyments of her Beloved. The Spouse of Christ, (whether by her you understand the Church or the believing Soul;) fometimes fees Christ only by the Eye of Faith at a distance, sometimes nearer under the wall; the Church enjoyeth him not as formerly, but he is near to her, he is under the very walls of her house: There is yet a partitionwall that keeps her Soul from the freeff enjoyments of him, but he is fometimes very near. This is the general scope of the Propoficion. But fecondly,

What are those walls behind which Christ stands, and when may 2. Qu

Christ be faid to stand thus behind the wall as to his Spoule?

Three or four things will open to you this notion of the wall, (behind which Christ stands) so far as any Interpreters have given us any light; in some of those senses he did once stand behind the wall, in others, he may and doth yet (as to his Spouse) stand behind a wall.

1. There was a time when he stood behind the wall of the Types, and Sacrifices of the Ceremonial Lam. The Apostle hath gi-

ven these shadows the denomination of a Wall, Ephel. 2. 14. Indeed the Apostle calls it a Partition-wall, because it divided betwist the Jews and Gentiles: but it was a wall also upon another account, for whiles it was up Christ was not fully revealed to his people; he did but fland behind the wall, all the while that the Ceremonial Law and the Types and Sacrifices that belong'd to it were on foot, the Apostles call'd these things shadows. There are that affirm, that eternal Life was not at all promited to the Jews. under the Law: but all agree it was not fo clearly promifed, as under the Gospel; nor the doctrine of Justification and free remission of fins: the great doctrines of Christ were darkly revealed,

Christ as to them stood behind this Wall.

2. Others by the Wall understand Christs humane nature. Christs humane nature was as a wall to the divine Nature; fach a wall, as the Pharifees could not through it fee him as the Saviour of the world, the true Messas, appropriavit parieti cum adhasit carni, faith Bernard. It is faid of Abraham, that he faw the day of Christ and rejayeed. There are doubtless many passages in this Song which relate to the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ; Possibly this may be one thing here intended: the Church by the Eye of Faith forelaw Christ coming in the flesh, and thus expresseth her felf ; he frandeth bebind the Wall : But in these two fenses it doth not concern us. Jesus Christ doth not as to us stand behind the wall, we may if we will croud him behind the wall, deviling types, and figns, and Ceremonies to fignific the mysteries of the Gofpel, but he hath made all these shadows vanish.

3. Thirdly, Others by the Wall understand the Creatures beart: to justifie their notion, they not only tell us, that a mans frength lies in his heart, as the strength of the City lies in the walls; but also that in Fer. 4. 19. I am pained at my very beart; the Heb. I am pained at the malls of my beart, קירות לבי, Christ fometimes flands behind the walls of our hearts; Behold, I fland at the door and knock. The Lord Christ oft-times comes near to the Soul even under the walls of it, and the Soul will not open, there he is forced to fland; but yet I cannot agree this the fenfe of the Text, for the Spoule Speaks this in a way of joy, rejoyeing that her Beloved was come fo near as to stand behind the wall; now the would never have done so if the wall had been the stony wall of her own

heart.

4. Fourthly, Therefore some understand it of the wall of Mortality: present in the body (faith the Aposse) we are absent from the Lord. Indeed the body is but a wall, if it were down the Soul of the Believer would be in the full enjoyment of Christ; there

is a fruth in all thefe. But,

s. I must confess I am apt to look upon the term Wall in a more general notion, and to make the fense no more than this, My Beleved is come nearer unto me, but yet I have not that full enjoyment of bim which I defire; he is fo near as the wall of an house is to the bonfe, but yet there is a wall that hinders me; there is fomething that hinders my enjoyment of him in that full and free manner which I have heretofore done, and do still defire to do. And this is. I fay, fometimes the case of the Church of Christ, and the case also of a particular believing Soul. But you will say, when is the time when Christ may be faid to fand behind the watt? I anfwer. It feems to be excellently described by the Prophet Zachariab, ch. 14. 6. 7. It fost come to pifs that in that day the light fall not be clear nor dark; But it shall be one day which shall be known. unto the Lord, not day nor night. Look as it is in the Artificial day, there is a time when it is thick mid-night-darkness; there is another time (just at the dawning of the day) when you shall see a little light afar off in the East. There is a time of twilight when it is neither night nor day, there's a great mixture of darkness and light: and there is a time of high-noon-day when the Light is clear and glorious. So it is in Gods dispensations to his Church and to the Souls of his Saints. Sometimes it is a time of mid-night-darkness, the Church hath no peace, no liberties; the ways to Sion mourn, and there is no coming to the folemn Feafts; the Soul cries out, where is my God become? My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And there is a time when the Soul or Church fees a little light, the eye of Faith is a little open'd, it fees the Promise afar off, and believes what it hath no present fenfe of; this is Christs coming skipping on the Mountains. And there is again a time when it is neither day nor night with the Spoule. The Church enjoys some Liberties, some Mercies, but groaneth under many evils, the Soul is not utterly forfaken, and cannot say that it is utterly forfaken, but it is it knoweth not how; there is a strugling in its womb, and it cannot enjoy God as formerly, it is not clear, and cannot make a judgment of itself; here now Christ standeth bebind ber wall , There is again's time when

3. 21.

it is full of the comforts of the Holy Ghoft, full of joy, land peace in believing, full of life, and full of strength. But thirdly, Some possibly will ask,

Why is the Lord pleased to ft and behind the wall fometimes ?

I answer, I. Sometimes be in driven thither by the fins of his people. The Image of Jealousie which the Jews had set up, and the superstitious abominations which they had brought into the Temple, Ezeeb. ch. S. g., drave the Lord, the glory of the Lord, from one place to another. When corruptions prevail in a Church, Christ stands behind the Wall, he is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity. Superstitions will drive him behind the wall, Idolatry will make him go asar off. And as it is with the Church in general, so it is with believing Souls in particular. The sins of particular Souls make Christ oft-times as to them stand behind the wall; his Love will not suffer him quite to leave and abandon them, but his Justice, his Purity and Holiness, makes him hide his sace in some measure and stand as it were behind the Wall, that they do not see and enjoy him as at former times.

2. Sometimes he chooseth this place, Out of the depths of his own infinite Wisdom. The Soul finds that it is not with it as at former times, it seeks for the Achen, that hath caused this change in the countenance of God towards it, but it can find none above ordinary infirmities: it may be the Lord is not driven behind the well by any particular prevailing corruptions in the Church or in the Soul, but is pursuing some wise purpose by a dark dispensation, trying the Spirits of his people what they will do, how they will bear his absence, what they will do to recover their Communion with him, &c. I have done with the Explication of the

Doctrine, I come to the Application of it.

It may be in this Discourse, I may be judged by some of you to have held a glass before your face, wherein you have had your particular state, or the state of the Church represented to you. Christ it may be appears to some of you this day as a friend behind a wall: we expect a glorious appearance of Christ in the Clouds, when we shall be caught up to meet him, but there is something that hinders, there's Christ behind a wall. We expect a more glorious time of Union of the Saints and Churches of God, and freedom for them; but we see It not yet come, there again is Christ behind a wall. Ander our particular miseries, and sadnesses and afflictions, we expect that Christ should according to his Promises

Use.

Promises appear to deliver his people from all their Tempters, all their Oppressions, but he appeareth not; there again is Christ behind our wall. Let us now only enquire what is our duty under

fuch dispensations: I will tell you as shortly as I can.

1. In the first place, Tobe of good comfort. It was a great piece of the Prophets work in all their dark Prophecies to comfort Gods people, and this is the will of God concerning us: and Lo here a great argument of comfort. Though our Lord be not yet come into our house, yet he is under the wall. The learned Mercer interpreting my Text, baulks all the notions of the Wall which I before hinted to you, and by it understands propinguum Christi auxilium, the nearnels of Christs help. The Churches wall (faith he) are the Promises, and the comforts of the Scripture, by which the Church (as with a wall) fortifieth, and defendeth her felf in the hour of the Crofs, in the day of Temptation: and behind this wall Christ stands ready to help : It is indeed fad to a Church, and to a Soul that Christ is not in the house, in the bosome of it, but when this is its misery, this again is its comfort, that he is not afar off: he is where he fees and kows its state and condition; it hath then Promises, sure Promises to help and to defend it : and Chrift is behind those Promises, they are all Yea, and Amen, in him, and they shall have a Yea, and Amen from him. Let therefore the faithful Saints and Servants of God lift up their heads in every dark condition. Let them remember that they have a wall of Promises at all times to secure them, and that Christ is behind that Wall to secure it.

2. Secondly, 'Tis but a well that hinders Christ and you from meeting. (I leave now Mercers notion of a Wall.) I say it is but a well that hinders, therefore be of good comfort. It is not a Rock that is impregnable, 'tis but a wall. A Wall is made up you know of Earth, or Brick, or Stone, or some such kind of matter which is corruptible, and penetrable, and will fall one day, and may say by use of means before it decays of it self. What is this wall that hinders Christ and his Church, Christ and the Souls of his Saints from their sullest Liberties and freest Enjoyments? be it what it will, being but a Wall it is not like to be eternal.

1. Is it a wall of sin and corruption? Essy 59. 2. Tour sins have separated betwint your God and you; penitential tears will wash it down, or those with the bloud of Christ will do it, and make it so that thy Beloved, that is like a Roe & a young Hore, will easily leap over this

Wall. 2. Is it the wall of some creature-rage and opposition. This is oft a strong wall to hinder the Spouses more open enjoyments of her Beloved: but this is but a wall, made up of brick & stone, and mortar: men great and small holding together by vertue of a common rage and madness against the Lord and His anointed. Alas! this mall will not last long, Christ hath his battering Ram when he pleaseth to use it, his undermining Wisdom when he will please to employ it, by which this mall shall either be broken down or blown up: be therefore of good comfort; Is it the mall of his own infinite Wisdom? then thou hast no reason to be troubled; it is better for thee that he stands behind the mall (if his wis-

dom be it) than that he were in thy house.

2. Secondly. Is Christ behind thy wall, thou standest concerned then. If the wall be the wall of thy beart, or the wall of thy lufts and corraptions, to endeavour to make his way for him into thy Soul . fo far as is in thy power : Beat down that wall of partition which is betwint thee and thy Beloved, The Pfalmift Pfalm 24. 9. cryes out. Lift up your heads, O you gates, lift them up you everlafting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Give me leave to speak to you Christians; do you want the presence of God with your Affemblies ? with your Souls &co as at former times ? Break dome your walls, break down your partition-walls, and the King of Gloty hall enter in. Get that hard Heart broken, that flubborn Spirit mortified, that dull and dead Heart quickened, that ftrong Hold thrown down, whatever it be that keepeth thy Soul from the free enjoyment of thy Saviour, " Open the door of thy heart, and the Beloved thall enter in : To engage you to some care this way, let me mind you of what in the beginning I hinted to you, wiz. That Chriff standeth behind the Wall; it is not faid, he resteth, he fitteth : no he flandeth. It is the posture, 1. Of One that maiteth for an opportunity, 2. Of one that knoweth not how to reff sill he hath it. The Prophet hath such an expression, Efay 304 1 Be and sherefore will she Lard wait that be may be gracious unte was Man whe to wait that are the receivers of Grace and Kind. nels; But fuchas the infinite mercy, and goodnels of God, that he waiteth that he may distribute kindness; he waiteth that he may be gracious! Oh, what an encouragement this is to every gracious Soul a to fee what, it is that hinders the Church in her, eppyments of God! what fins have provoked God? or what fins they are that have proposed God to withdraw himfelt from their particular Souls, and to labour to be humbled for them, and by mortification to purge them out, that so the wall of separation being thrown down, the Church may enjoy its Beloved, and the particular Soul may enjoy its beloved again as at former times. The Lord while he is behind the wall stands, he rests in the bosons of his people: but he stands when he absent and

withdraws himfelf from his people.

3. Laftly, Doth Christ stand behind our wall? what reason have we then to keep our station in the boufe, and to take heed how we behave our felves there? I Tocak to you in the Metaphor of the Text. It is good to be near to the Lord Jefus Chrift. Stand falt in the practice and profession of Holiness, and in the pureft profession of it. Though it may not even with the firi-Geft Servants of God be at all times alike, vet Chrift is always either with them in the house, or standing behind their wall; he is always with them, or coming to them, or very night them. The time of defertion is ordinarily a time of great temptation, and great Apostacy; when the wicked Servant concluded that his Lord was gone a far journey, thier he fell to eat and arrick with the drunken. But, Oh take heed what you do! Christ is not far off at any time, he is but bebind our wall, when he is not within our walls. He is very nigh when we pollibly judg him afar off: yea, and if Christ be under the wall, we had all of us also need to take heed what we do within the houses and the rather, because he that flandeth there is neither blind that he cannot fee, nor idle that he will not use this viffee Faculty; but in the time of his absence from his Church, or from the particular Soul, he is looking in at the Windows. But this Proposition must be the Subject of my next Exercise.

The Lord T flar Christin 1. Say I in withdrawing from it.
Spaif, doth ver track he as in that, and carrolly office it her inLevian. Here we say they withing withing have a prove

of their appropercions, and their firm and fetled believing

der fand by M. S. of a relation belowing Soul on a boll, of Relieves and animal both a rich for some and ining both a rich factor of the both a rich factor in the believeth that the different factor is a factor of the conference of the conference

Canticles 2.9:

He looketh in, [or forth] at the windows: he sheweth bimself, [or he flourisheth] through the lattes.

Am come to the fecond expression, where the Spouse expresset the Actions of her Beloved: two things she says of him;

1. He looketh in at the Windows. 2. He sheweth himself at the

Lattels.

I observed to you before, that the first Expression may either be read as we read it, be looketh forth at the windows: or else, he looketh in at the windows. If we consider it in the first Sense, it seems to import the same thing with the latter Expression, viz. Christs more impersed appearing, and shewing of himself to his people; as one that looks out at a window is impersedly seen, but part of him is discerned. It in the second Sense, it signifies Christs narrow and curious observing of his peoples behaviour: As a man under a wall, that hath a curiosity distinctly and exactly to see what is done in the house, looketh in at the Windows. Two things the Expression holds out to us:

1. Christs knowledge of the state of his Spouse, even when he

hath withdrawn himfelf from her.

2. Christs curious and exact Observation, both of the state and carriage, and demeanour of his people at all times: Hence the Proposition is.

The Lord Jesus Christ in the day of his withdrawings from his Spouse, doth yet truly know her state, and curiously observes her be-

baviour. Here are two things which I have to prove :

r. That Christ doib know his Sponses state. Whether you understand by the Spouse a particular believing Soul, or a body of Believers united in a Church; It is true concerning both: the Proposition is plain, and cannot be doubted by him who believeth that the Lord Jesus Christ is God as well as man: but because much of the comfort of Gods people depends upon the quickness of their apprehending, and their firm and settled believing of

Prop.

this Proposition, I shall confirm it to you by some other Scripture. The first remarkably fad dispensation of God to his Church, was in Egypt, they fighed by reason of their bondange, Exod. 2. 23. 1. 5. And God looked upon the Children of Ifrael (faith the Text) and God bad respect unto them Chap, 3.2.9. God speaking to Mofer, faith, Bebold the cry of the Children of Ifrael is come unto me, and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians have oppressed them. God sometimes doth suffer his enemies, as it were, to shut him out of his own house, and to make havock there; but when he is not in the house, when his people do not see his presence amongst them, they see nothing but the rage and malice of their enemics; yet even then he is behind their wall, looking in at their windows, beholding all that is done to them. In this methinks God is like the good man of an house, that hath an affault made upon his house by thieves; they turn him out of doors, and then fall to the binding and threatning and tormenting of his Family, and rifling of his goods; the good man is out of the house, but he stands under the walls, he looks in at the windows, he sees every. thing they do, and when his time ferveth will call them to account for it. So doth God. Indeed the enemies of Gods people cannot do as one man that is stronger than another may, viz. turn him out by force; when God leaves his house it must be his own just will and pleasure, not because he cannot stay, but because he will notshis wisdom guideth him to go out, and give leave to his enemies to rage in his Sanctuary; but God stands under his peoples wall all the time, he heareth their threatnings of his Children and Servants; he sees their enemies binding of them; and he will one day call them to a just and firich account for all, Saint Stephen, Act. 7. 34 repeating that passage in Exidus doubles the word, Ibave feen, I have feen the affliction of my people, which is in Egypt, and have beard their groating. I have feen, I have feen. God feeth his peoples Sins, Fer. 23.13,14. I bave feen folly in the Prophets of Samaria and he also seeth his peoples misery; he seeth their Sins, to chastise and punish them; he feeth their Mileries, that he may comfort and help them; the Pfalmift faith, he feeth mifebief to requite it. There is a remarkable Text, Pfal. 33.13, 14. The Lord boketh from Heaven, be beholdeth all the Sons of men; from the place of his habitation be looketb upon all the inhabitants of the earth, v. 18. Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear bim, upon them that hope in bis Mercy, to deliver their Soul from death, and to keep them alive from Famine. Gods:

Gods eye is over all the Earth . All things are naked before him with whom we have to do. His eyes run to and fro the Earth, beholding the evil and good: Ah, but God hath an effectal eve upon bis people : Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear bims as he told the people of the Jews, that all the Nations of the earth were his; but Zion he had chosen for a pecusiar people. So his eyes fee all the inhabitants of the Earth; but he hath an especial eve upon his people. Ay, and more especially when they are in Mifery, to deliver their Souls from death, &c. There are

two things which confirm this from the nature of God.

The first is Gods omniprefence and omnifcience. Whoso truly toprehendeth God, must apprehend him as an infinite being, filling Heaven and Earth and all places with his effence; which effence of his is not a dark effence, that feeth nothing, but an active operative affecing being so that he that fancieth a God not feeing not knowing, not fully understanding all things, all his creatures, all their motions, and all their actions and states, fancieth an Idol instead of the true God; for the Divine Being must needs both fill all places and fee all Actions; hence those Scriptures, Heb. 4. 13. All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do; and again. The eyes of the Lord run to and fro the Earth, beholding the evil and the good; what faith the Pfalmit, Pfal. 94. v.g. he that planteth the ear shall be not bear? be that formed the eye shall be not fee ?

The second is Gods love and special care to and for his people. This maketh him more especially and wifely to observe and take notice of his people; hence he is faid to refpett and to regard them, Pfal. 102. 17. He will regard the prayer of the destinte, and not despite sheir prayer. As God feeth all things, all persons, So God regardeth and respecteth the state and condition of his people: Canaan is called the place that the Lord eareth for. The Love that the Sifter of Mofes had to Mofes could not leave him in the Ark of Flags. without any further care of him; the must stand afer off, to see what would be done unto him, Exed, 2. 4. Harars Love would not let her go quite away from her Child, but when the had thrown it under a thrub, the must go, and a good way off, fit over against it to fee what would become of it. The tender Love which God hath for his Saints, engageth him when he hath left the house vet to fland under the wall and to look in at the windows to take no. rice of their state and condition.

But Secondly, I told you the phrase doth not only import

Gods

Gods knowledg of his peoples frate, but his carrious and exall obfervation, both of the flate of his people, and also of their behaviour. A man may look into an house when thieves have broken in, to fee how they use his Family, and what those of his Family suffer fro them; and he may look into his house to see how his Family behave themselves when his back is turned upon them. Christ looks into his house for both these ends; he curjously observeth his peoples fufferings, and his peoples doings, you shall find this eminently proved, almost in every of the Epistles, which Saint John at Gods command wrote to the feven Churches of Afia Revel. Chap. 2. Chap. 3. God takes notice of wicked mens behaviour under afflictions, I Kings 21. 29. he faw Abab humbling himself; he took notice of the Ifraglites cry, of Hezekishs prayer, of the Few fafting in the Babylonift Captivity; in thort the Text of Scriptures might be almost without number, which I might produce in this case; but the evidence of this Proposition lieth in the perfect nature of God, confidered as to his Omniscience and as to his Tuffice. Of the first I spake before : The knowledg of God is fuch, that it reacheth to the numbring of hairs, the fall of a sparrom, &cc. God is also a just and righteous God. And indeed this observation of his is necessary, to the end that he might declare his righteousness: The Apostle, 2 Thesal. 1. 6. faith, b is a righteons thing with God, to recompense Tribulation to them that trouble his people : And to those that are troubled reft and peace; either here or hereafter. Now as to punishments God giveth unto his enemies according to the merit of their fact, for the doing of which it is necessary, that he should know what they have done. And as to the remards of bis people, though they be of Grace not of debt, not according to an exact proportion of merit; yet the Lord doth freely of Grace reward according to his peoples Obedience, and works of holinels. So that besides the plentiful evidence which the Scripture giveth to this truth, it appeareth also nocesfary from an evidence of reason considering the righteouthers of God, that he should strictly and executly know and observe both the state and behaviour of his people. I come to the Application which will be for caution Confolation and Exhortation.

the Cherche 2. Tothe people of God themselves. Canton.

Fight To the cuemies; It is our variety, that we think God, fuch a one as our felves; the Palmitt of old complained, That above broke

broke in pieces the Lords people and affilied his beritage, they flew the widow and the ftranger and murtbered the fatherles; yet they faid the Lord (ball not fee, neither (ball the God of facob regard it. The Pfalmift calls them for this Brutish fools, and confutes them from Gods efficiency; be that planted the ear shall be not bear? As therefore Hannah in her fong fpake to her enemies : So let me fpeak to all, that have any thing of that root of bitterness in them; Talk no more fo exceeding proudly let not arrogancy come out of your mouth : For the Lord is a God of knowledg, and by him actions are weighed. O do not do any thing presuming that God seeth not, or regardeth not; you will find one day that God is a God of Knowledg. and that all your actions are weighed by him; he may for a time, throw his Children (like Hagar) under a shrub; or leave his Spouse (as Moses) was left in a thin ark of Bulrushes, ready to be washed away with every wave, but he will be wherehe can have an eye upon them; he will see what becomes of them. God had his Churches in Afia, for their Sins he left his house. The Turk hath broken in and made havock for very many years; but Christ hath all this while been looking in at the windows. Christ had his Spoule in Bohemia, in Germany, in many other places for their Sins. The Popish party hath broken in, flain his Servants, abused his Children, hath not the Lord feen it? yes, he hath feen the mischief and he will require it. There is not a Saint that hath been imprifoned or died; but the Lord hath feen it, and the time will come, when God will let them know that he was looking in at the windows of their prisons, and inquisitions, &c. God left his people here in Queen Maries time, and they fuffered many hard things; but Christ was all the while looking in at the window, and it was but a little time before God let them know that he was looking on their mischief to requite it. Let therefore every one hear and fear and take heed what they do in Gods house, i. e. to a people fearing and ferving God, though they fee God bath forfaken them. It was but an indifcreet passage of Davids enemies, when they said, God bath forfaken bim, perfecute and take bim, for their is none to deliver bim, Pfal. 71.11. Those that are politick in the world will teach you; How angry fo ever you fee a Father or Mother to be with a Child; yet to take beed bow you use the Child, what you say of it or do to it; because they are in such a root of Natural affection in Parents to Children, that though they may be in a prefent passion. yet their love will return to their Child, and they will then be anery with you for what you have spoken of him, or wherein you have dealt hardly with him. I dare warrant it a good rule in this case. You may possibly read in Gods providences, that he hath a controverly with his people, and is very angry with them; but vet even then take heed, what you fay of them, what you do unto them: For there is in the heart of Christ, a radicated love to his Spoule, his anger to Zian will pals over, and he will then puniff the flout beart of Allwia, Il. 10. 12. you shall observe in the Prophets, that there was no Nation that God used to afflich the Temes but the same Prophets, that Prophesied of the Temish Affici-

on by them , did also by and by Prophesy their ruine,

But secondly, Let this be a caution also to the people of God, 2. Branch That they in their despondencies do not Blaspheme God, and fay the Lord feeth not; it is that to which we are very prone. The Prophet chideth the Jews for it, If. 40. v. 27. Wby fayeft thou, O Facob, and Speakest thou, O Ifrael, my may is bid from the Lord? There is no child of God but deliberately must know, and say and confess, that the Lord seeth, and knoweth him, and knoweth his flate and condition: But as David spake that in hatte, which he knew was otherwise; so the children of God are ready in haste to fay, the Lord feeth not, and they are subject to temptations to think God seeth not, or that the Almighty doth not regard it; but Ah Christians! Let not such a thought enter into your hearts. God may wink at your fufferings, but he feeth them be may frand afar off, but his eyes run to and fro, beholding mischief to requite it, and beholding you to deliver you in his own Seafon.

In the fecond place, This notion is of great concernment, to the 2. Wie. peoble of God for their consolation. The great argument to comfort fuch as are in a fuffering flate, must be from the hopes of a better condition shortly. Now this may easily be concluded from this confideration that Christ looks in at the window, i. c. exactly and diffinctly knows, and curiously observeth the state and condition of his people; which will appear to you if you confider.

I. That he that looks in at the window is full of pity and tender compassion; he doth not look upon the miseries of his people, (as a New or some other monster,) to Triumph in and over them, or to infult upon them; no, he will have compassion according to the 3 Lam. 32,33. multitude of his mercies : For be doth not office willingly nor grieve the children of men, James 5. 11, The Lord is very pitiful, and of

great compassion, Psal. 103. 13. As a Father pityeth his Children, so the Lord pityeth them that fear him; hence he is said to have tender Mercies, bowels of Mercy. God is not delighted in the afflictions of his people; the Prophet hath an high expression,

If. 63.9. In all their affiliaions be was afflicted.

Secondly, He that but looketh in at the window, can come into the boufe when he pleafeth; as he wanteth not love to move him, fo he wanteth not power to inable him, when he pleafeth to deliver his people; whoso doubteth this must doubt whether his Saviour be God almighty yea or no; for if he be Almighty, All power is given to bim both in Heaven and in Earth, and be doth and can do what foever be pleafeth. Now these two things being premised, nothing can hinder him but his wildom, if he be able to help because of his omnipotent power, and willing, because he is full of pity and compassion and tender Mercy, what hinders him; especially considering that his eye is upon his people, that he feeth and knoweth his state, save only his wisdom. Put the case as to a Father and a Child, because God himself hath pleased to take that notion. It is very possible that a Child may be in Misery, and yet the Father not help him, because he doth not know the afflicted state of his Child. It is very possible that a Child may be in Misery, and the Father may know it, and yet not help his Child, because he is a man of no Bowels, no pity, no good-nature at all. It is very possible that a Child may be in Mifery, the Parent may know it, and be a pitiful Parent, full of bowels, full of kindness; and yet he may not help his Child, because it may be beyond his reach, out of his power, and beyond his ability. But now suppose a Child in Milesy, and suppose the Father diffinctly, and particularly to know all the miferies, all the fufferings of his Child; and further suppose this Father to have as much kindness and bowels for his Child, as you can imagine should be in the parent; finally, suppose this Parept to have it in his power to help and relieve his Child and you should yet see this Child, these Children, yet lying in their Misery without any help, any relief at all, what could you conclude, but that the wisdom of this Parent, who belt knows and understands the Condition of his Child, feeth that this is for his Childs good; and best for him, and that it is which makes him seemingly to neglect and to difregard him: It is the very case between God and his People, whether particular believing Souls, or the Church of Christ which is his Spouse. O comfort your selves with this then.

then under all your afflictions, all your darkness, comfort your felves here; you look fometimes upon a poor tempted Soul, a poor deferted Soul, a poor forfaken Church which God hath given up for a time to the lufts and will of his enemies; I fav you look upon them, and you are ready to cry out, Ah I here is a fad house a fad Soul, a fad Church; well at the worst yet comfort your selves with this, Christ looks in at the windows. If the Devil be in the house tempting or plaguing, if wicked men be in the house afflicting the Servants of God; yet Christ is at the windows beholding all that is done; he was at the windows of the Church of Ephefue. Rev. 2. 2. I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience. At the window of the Church of Smyrna, Rev. 2. 9. Iknow thy works. and tribulation, and poverty; he faw the Devil casting some of them into prison, &c. He was out of the house, when the Tems were carried into Captivity; they could never else have been carried. but he was at the window and faw the Edomites looking on, and flanding on the other fide helping forward the affliction and rejoycing over them; how elfe could he have told them of it by his Prophet Exekiel and Obadiab! The Children of Ifrael were carried into Affria and Babylon, but Christ stood at the window, how else doth he, If chap. 10. and again Chap. 47. threaten both those Nations for what they did against his people! Comfort then your felves with this; from hence you may conclude, I. That God will one day call his enemies to account for what they do in his house. 2. That he will relieve his friends, when his own time cometh. 3. And that he will reward them for all that they fuffer for him. He that stands at the window, he hath a piercing eye, and feeth all that is done, and he is just to render tribulation to them that trouble his people, and to those that are troubled rest and peace. But Laftly, Doth the Spoules beloved look in at the windom?

How then are all the Servants of God concerned to take heed, 3. Ufe. even in the time of Gods withdrawing from them bow they behave themselves in the boule. Let the Church of Christ, let every particular Soul look to themselves in their day of darkness, how they behave themselves; for Christ looks in at the windows, not only to behold what they fuffer but to fee what they do, and how they fuffer. It is usually faid that it is an barder thing for Christians to bear prosperity than for them to bear advertity; and they have more need to watch in a time of fulness, than in a time of emptiness;

Hh 2

that

that may probably be true. The Sun (in the fable) made the traveller cast off his cloak when the wind only made him to wrap it closer about him. But there is no time when a Christian may slack his watch; there is no time but Christ observes their behaviour. You will say what should they take heed of, or to, or how should the Spouse of Christ in the time of his withdrawings from her behave herself. I answer, generally, take heed of grieving the Lord by sinning in such an Hour; but more particularly.

Micah 7: 9.

1. Let patience bave her perfett work, this is Saint James his counsel with this addition, That you may be perfett, and wanting nothing, Jam. 1.3. Thus the Lords ancient Spouse in Micab, I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because he hath laid it upon me. Oh! take heed of murmuring, repining, charging God foolishly in the time of your trial; remember he looks in at the window, he fees who have patience and who have not; who accepts of the punishment of their iniquity and who do not.

2. Let Poist also bave its perfett work. These are the two graces which God intendeth the tryal of in an evil time, though be kills me (faith Job) yet I will trust in him. He will bring me forth to the fight (faith the Church, Micah 7. 9.) and I will behold his Rightenifnels, &c. blessed are they (faith our Savious to Thomas)

who have not feen and yet believed.

great remedies, Catholick remedies against all the evils can be sail the Spoule of Christ. It may man afficied? (Saith Saint James) Rev bim pray. Is any Soul tempted? let it pray; is it deferted? let it ery, My God, My God, why hast thou for faken me? Is any Church afficied? let it pray too, "is the course that the Saints of God always took. Christ looks in at the window, and he loves to see his people upon their knees, he saw the afficient of his people in Egyps and the board their ery.

4. Laftly, Let boliness bave its uninterrupted comfe: No dispenfation to any Soul, to any Church, can be such as to give Gods people a liberty to fin against God. Holinoss lieth in two things:

1. Avoiding finful actions, and refifting Temprations unto them.

2. Doing these positive was which God requiresh of m. What-ever God doth to you, yet take you had of running from him. If Thieves break into an House, and bind the Servants or thecaten them.

them; yet they should not be falle to their Master, to deliver up his goods into their hands, or to joyn with them in rifling his house. See what the Lord faith, Matth. 24. 48, 49, 50, 51. concerning that evil Servant, who in his Masters absence shall begin to fmite bis fellow-Servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken. In fuch a day if finners intice you, yet O do not you confent to them! There is a danger when the Rod of the wicked refleth upon the let of the righteons, of their putting forth their hands unto iniquity; to prevent which, Pfal. 125. v. 3. God hath promifed it shall not reft. there. O remember to refift all temptations to fin in the time of your defertions, that your Lord delayeth not his coming; and that whiles he is absent he still looketh in at the window, let him not see you complying with the lufts of your own or others hearts. Buton the contrary: Let him fee you watching unto prayer, watching unto all manner of Holinels in your conversations, practifing your felves in felf-denial, Humility, Charity, in the keeping of your Gods commandments slet him fee you more fridt, more exact than ever, more fearful to fin against him than ever you were, and more careful to please him than ever, more diligent in the works of your general and particular Calling than ever. He is at the window; I will commend one Text to you, and fall conclude, begging of you, that it may not be verified in you; it is that fer. 8; 45. Spoken of the Children of Hersel in a time of attiction: Moreover thou shalt fay unto them, thus faith the Lord, hall shey fall and not arife? shall be turn away and not return, &c. v. 6. I bearkened and beard, but they fpake not aright, no man repented bim of his wickedness, saying what have I done? every one carned so bie courfe as the borfe rufbeth into the Battel, &c.

Cant. 2. 9.

Shewing bimself through the Lattice.

Am come to the last clause of this Verse: The Spoule here speaks of her Beloved as not being in her house; coming indeed towards her and making haste, yea and come something near, standing under ber wall, looking in at ber windows: and according to the phrase of the Text, shewing bimself through the Lattice. By these words the (doubtless) fignifies an imperfect view of her Beloved; he that is feen at a window or lattice, is feen, but imperfectly feen. But the word translated fhemeth, is no ordinary word; if you look at the Margent of your Bibles, you will find that the word properly fignifieth flourishing. The word is from you, which fignifieth be bath flourished. Avenarius noteth, that the Hebrew word is akin to Nz' prodiit, he went forth and to ETD emicuit, he hath fhined out. He further notes that it is ufed. not to express the greenness and first coming out of a leaf, but of a flowre of Fruit, it is here used in the third conjugation; and properly fignifieth, be bath made bimfelf to flourish : it is the word used Efay 27.6. Ifrael hall bloffom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit : and concerning Grass, Pfalm 90. 6. In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up, and fo in other places.

Abe Lord Jesus Christ in this life, even in the day of his absence from his Spouse, looketh out gloriously and advantageously upon her through the Lattice: The word ward signifies these three things, 1. It signifies a discovery of himself, as the flower when it buddeth and blossometh discovers itself. 2. It signifies such a discovery as hath a heauty in it, like the flowers first discovery of itself which is heautiful and lovely. 3. It signifies such a discovery as is of prosit and advantage to another: for I told you that it is used to express not the first greenness, when the grass or flower first appeareth out of the Earth: but the first appearing of the flower

of Fruit; two things there are in the Proposition.

1. First, Christ in the day of his absence beholds his people through the Lattices.

2. Secondly, That this discovery of Christ to his Sponse, is very lovely and profitable to them.

In the handling of this Proposition, I will first enquire, 1. What

Prop.

these Lattices are through which Christ in his absence from his Spouse looketh upon them. 2. Wherein it appeareth that he had-

deth, or flourisheth through the Lattice.

What are those Lattices through which Christ in the day of his ab- 1. Qusence looketh on his people? The word is properties on the second of the second of

1. Generally; So tignifies (as I said before) Christs imperfect discovery of himself unto the Spouse. A man that only sheweth himself at a window, or through a Lattes, he sheweth himself, but it is a very imperfect view that any takes of him there. Another may see him, and so see him as to know it is be, but none can have a sull and distinct sight of him. Christ in the day of his absence from his people looketh upon his people, and sheweth himself to them, though not so fully as at other times, yet as a man through the Lattesses: But.

2. Particularly; There is a fourfold Lattefs.

1. There was an old lattefs, through which Christ looked upon his Spouse, it was the lattels of the Law contained in Ordinances (as the Apostle calls it,) the Types and Sacrifices, and Prophecies of old; the Apostle calls these a Partition-wall, they were so as they made a division betwixt Few and Gentile, they were a Lattels as Christ was seen by, and through them in a more imperfect degree of manifestation: Christ was seen in them to believing Souls, how else did they (as the Apostle speaks, Heb. 11.) live and die by faith? but how little of them was feen in that dispensation? thence the Apostle saith, life and immortality were brought to light. by the Gofpel, 2 Tim. I. 10. Eternal life and immortality through Christ was in being under the Law. It was then the defigned pors tion of the Saints, the Kingdom, the Inberitance prepared for them; yea and it was revealed too, flet the Socinians talk what they will,) but immortality was (comparatively) in the dark, till Christ Jesus came in the flesh : all the three thousand and odd: years before Christ was absent from his people, the Meffin to be revealed, the Christ to come: and all that time he looked upon his people in a more imperfect way through dark Prophecies, fignifigant Types and Sacrifices; but under the Gospel he hath looked

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upon them more fully. This Lattice is pull'd down, He bath abelifted the Law contain'd in Ordinances. Thus Christ looks no more through the Latteffes, though in this fenfe it was true when Solo-

mon wrote this book.

2. Secondly, There is a lattice of mortality through which Christ looketh still upon his people, and will look. The Apostle faith, that while we are prefent in the body we are ablem from the Lord If we be abient from the Lord, he must needs also be abfent from us; and indeed the flate of mortality is that little time of which he speaketh, in which he will not be with his people; it is the time in which we do not fee him as hoir; what hinders? the lattice of the body, the lattice of our mortal state? but he looks through the lattice; though his people while they are in the body do not fee the Lard as he is yet, they fee fornething of him through a glass darkly (as the Prophet expresseth it.)

2. There is a lattice of Ordinances. Of this Mr. Ainsworth understands the Text, this (possibly) is that glass, through which the Apostle faith, that we feethe Lord. Thus Chrift looketh upon his people through the lattice while he looks upon them in the preaching of his Word, speaking peace to his peoples Souls, whiles he doth offer himself unto his people in his Sacraments: these are all Lattesses, through which the Souls of the Saints do by the Eve of Faith behold Christ, and in which the Soul oft-times meets with some sensible enjoyments of him, but they are all short of that beatifical Vision by which Saints in Heaven behold Gods face. And indeed, these looks are but the looks of an absent Christ when we shall fee him face to face, and come to be ever with the Lord; we shall find our enjoyment of our Beloved there will be a more glorious enjoyment, and more fweet than ever our enjoyment of Christ in Ordinances hath been though I doubt not but I speak to many to whom this enjoyment, this fight of our Beloved hath appeared exceeding sweet and glorious. I will add but one thing more.

4. There is a lattice of necessary Influence. I have fometimes amongst you had occasion to distinguish betwirt those influences of divine Grace which are necessary, and those which are indeed exceeding fweet and advantagious, but not neceffary: I will open it now a little to you. Look as to our natural life, the Apostle faith. In him we live, and move, and have our being. David faith, that God keeps our fouls in life : but now, there are de-

grees of thefe influences. There is an influence that it meeffers, if God did not hourly concur to keep our vital faculties in an ability to operate, we must die. But now God may do this, and yet withdraw fuch influences as are necessary for to keep us in bealth. and in a quick, and lively vegete condition; fo it is with the Soul. There is no grace, no spiritual ability but is from God, but there are different influences ; There is a necessary influence and communication of Grace, without which the Union between Christ and the Soul, and the state of Regeneration could not be maintained. (for the perseverance of the Saint is from the influence of grace.) Now there are further influences of grace, the quickening frengthening, comforting influences of it, without some degrees of which it is very possible, that the Union of the Soul with Christ, and the state of Regeneration may be maintained and is maintained in the hours of defertion. Now I fav. when the gracious Soul barely lives the life of grace without those degrees of spiritual frength, spiritual liveliness and comfort, that other Souls have, or which it possibly hath at another time, then Christ looks upon it through the lattice; and it is a notion which I would have well digested by every gracious Soul's for it hath in it (as I shall shew you anon) a great deal of comfort. And for the Church of Christ, (which is his collective Spoule, as Lmay fay,) Christ in the day of his absence from her, yet looks upon her through the Lattice : She is never without fomething of his presence, although she at no time (while in this life) enjoyeth him as the thall enjoy him in glory; and although her enjoyments of the presence of God in her Assemblies be not at all times equal, her liberties and freedom may be straitned, but even at that time he will thew himfelf to her through the Lattice: the shall yet see and own her Beloved, and know still that he is her Redeemer and Saviour. So much for the first Branch of the Propolition, the fecond follows.

That this fight of Christ when he doth but look through the lattice is a flourishing fight. I noted to you before that the word figuified a Flower's shewing of it self, and that not in the berb when it begins first to appear out of the Earth green, but when the flower of fruit first, shews its, 1. Amisbleness, 2. Profit and advantage.

So that I shall open this in two things.

1. The lowest and darkest discoveries of Christ to the gracion Soul are exceeding omiable. It is sweet for the Church or for the Soul to see Christ, though it be but through the Lattice. Arisbam: when

Luke 7. Marth. 9. 21. John 20. 15.

when he law the day of Christ afar off, faw Christ but through the Lattice ; yet (faith our Saviour) be rejoyzed. All the belie-Ving Tens who only faw Christ in a Lamb, a Scape-goat, &c. faw him but through the Lattice, yet the fight was very fweet to them. Indeed all the Saints that have fived, and do yet live in the world have but feen Christ through the lattice of mortality, through the lattice of Ordinances; yet there are many of them who have feen him as a Flower shooting forth, the fight they have had of Christ hath filled their Souls with a spiritual joy, pleasure and delight. The Church of God, and particular Souls have been many times in such a state, that they have not had that enjoyment of their Beloved, that fight of Christ which they have had at other times: but yet the little which they have feen and tafted of him hath been exceeding pleasant. The very dust, and stones of Zion are defireable, Pfalm 102. 14. The Fewith Harps were Tweet to them when they were in Babylon. Pfalm 137.1. You read of three Women in the Gospel! One desired no more but to wash bit feet and to kiss them; Another but to touch the bem of bis garment. A third (that was Mary Magdalen) but to have bis dead body. It was sweet to David to be a door-keeper in the bouse of the Lord, Pfalm 84. 10. The reason is, because Cant. 5. 16. He in altogether defires. You shall find the Spouse describing her Beloved from part to part, Cant. 6. 10, 11. Every part was beautiful : Yea. give me leave yet to add a fittle further, that oft-times Christs looks (in this life) through the Lattice are more prized than those more fall by the Spoufe. The believing Soul, the Church of Christ, receives them with more thankfulnefs, and more admiring of the Love of Christ, then she received his fuller manifestation; the reason is the same, as why a crust of Bread is oft-times more precious, more thankfully received, more greedily eaten by the hungry man, than a full Table when his appetite was not fo good. Fasting in spiritual things as well as to natural food, quickens the appetite.

2. Secondly, The phrase imports something more, viz. That Christ's looks upon his Spouse even through the lattice, are fruitful and profitable to the Souls of his Saints: and this may be an additional reason why they are so sweet and pleasant, every thing that we apprehend profitable, being upon that very account as profitable, also sweet. I say, any aspect of Christ is profitable, it is like the budding of the Flower which bringeth sruit to the Owner, as

well as pleasure to his Eye. Christ gave Peter a look after that he had denied him, it was profitable to him, for the Text faith, he went out and wept bitterly. When the Woman had but rouched the hem of his garment, it is faid, that vertue went out from him, and he discerned it. There are some bewitching eyes, that carry mischief in their looks; Christ's Eyes are vertuous Eyes, he never looks upon a Soul; but vertue goes out with his look. Hence Gods shewing mercy to his people, healing, delivering them, &c. It is in Scripture express under the notion of Gods looking upon them, and prayers for help, are expressed also in this phrase, Christ is compared to the Sun in the Firmament : now the least asped of the Sun upon the Earth is you know not only amiable and glorious, but it is also profitable, it cheareth and refresheth the Earth. and emits a vertue, by which the plants are refreshed, and grow : fo it is with Christ, his look upon the Spoule, upon his Church, upon the Souls of his people, is a chearing, comforting, refreshing look, when he looketh through the Lattice, he flourisheth through the Lattice. But this is enough to have spoken to the Doctrinal part of the Propolition : I come to the Ufe.

In the first place , Obferve the difference here betwiet Earth and 1. Ufe. Heaven, yea, betwirt the flate and condition of the Spoule of Cheift bere on Earth. Take the Church, the Soul that hath the best, freest and fullest enjoyments of Christ here, they see him but shrough the Lattice. Alas, how little do we fee of Christ? But faith the Apostle, It does not yet appear what we shall be. The truth is, it doth not yet appear to us what Christ is? Alas ! how little do we ver know of him? You now fee Chrift, as his Word revealeth him as we are able to express him, and so he is very glorious, very fweet; but how little can he thew you of the Sea that lades it with a foon into a little hole? or how little doth he fee of it, that only feeth it in a Land-skip, or in a little creek where it comes up? We are not able to tell you what Christ is to his Saints! If we could tell it you, you are not able to conceive it. When that your corruptible fisall have put on incorruption, and you shall fee bim as be is clothed with all his Fathers glory, and letting out his Love to the utmost in glorifying you with his glory, when you half behold him face to face, and with open face behold the glory of God; when the Soul thall not be cooped up to the natrow and strait view it now hath by an earthly eye, nor restrained as now it is by an andue diffance and low especity; Oh ! what

will Christ be at that day! at that day when the Lattice shall be broken, and you shall see your Beloved in a full body, and be able to bear the glorious fight of him; what shall that day be? shall it not require you for all your believing, and for all your doings, for all your tears, your prayers, yea for all your fufferings for his name? Observe also the difference of Saints from Saints, yea of one Saint from himself as to this Life, and the cause of it : you see the difference, one is chearly, another is fad ; one walks in the dark and fees no light, another is full of Light; what makes this difference? here it is Christ is pleased to be in the house with fome of his people, and at fome times, upon others of his Saints; yea upon the fame Saints at other times, he is pleased to look through the Lattice. had been to assert the re-offe

In the second place, Of what exceeding comfort may this notion (if well digefied,) be unto the Church of Christ, and to every gras cious Soul. I fay, this potion, That in that day when Christ in justice, or wildom thinks not fit to be in the boufe as at other times, yet he even then looks in upon them through the Lattice, Non defirit etiamfi deferere videatur. Though the Lord doth feem to forfake, yet he doth never utterly forfake his people. He never utterly forfakes his Church, nor the Souls of his Saints. The Affemblies of his people may be scattered, their Liberties diffurbed, their eyes may not see their Teachers, but yet they shall not be utterly forfaken. If they go into Babylon, the Lord will be with them there to ffrengthen and to uphold them. It was Christs Promise to his Disciples when they were to lose his bodily presence and his outward Ministry, John 14. I will not leave you comfortlefs; how then? I will fend you the Comforter. When the Lord. doth no more for his people, he will even then fend them the Comforter: If they have not their outward Liberties, they shall have more inward freedom and spiritual Liberty; if they have not the comforts of the Creature, they shall have the comforts of his Spirit. If he doth not meet them in publick folemn Ordinances as formerly, he will meet them in private Duties more than formerly; they may lofe a ftream, but they shall never lofe the Fountain; if he looks on them no otherwise, yet he will see them through the Lattice. Ho may forfake them with a great forfaking for their fins, but he will never utterly forfake them, Pfalm 80.33. My loving kinduels will I not utterly take from them.

2. Nor secondly is it matter of less consolation to the people of God confider-

Ufe 2.

confidered feverally. God may leave his people in a fad condition, they may not find that spiritual Strength, nor that spiritual Life. nor that foiritual comfore which others feel, or themselves have felt at other times, they may walk in the dark and fee no light; but yet even at that time Christ will be looking on them through the Lattice, he will be inwardly strengthening and upholding them, that their Spirits shall not fail before him. Away then Chriflians with your unwarrantable fears and dejections! fay not. God bath utterly cast you off, or that he bath forgottento be gracious. Christ never so forfakes his Spouse, but he looks upon her through the Lattice, and if thou feelt him not, it is not because he is not there, but because thou hast an ill eye of Faith and canst not difcern him. There may indeed be but a little meal in the Cruife, a little oil in the Barrel, a little comfort, a little frength or but a little spiritual Life; but yet the Oil shall not fail from the Cruife nor the meal from the Barrel, till there shall be plenty in Samaria, till the life of Grace shall be swallowed up in the life of Glory. Wherefore comfort your felves in these words. The last use shall be a word of Exhortation, in two or three particulars.

In the first place, Labour to difeers your Beloved looking through Ufe. Exb. the Lattice. Our happiness lies in this , that let our condition be I. Branch. what it will, yet Christ in it looks upon us, and is good, very good to us: But our comfort lieth in our knowledg and difcerning of this. This is that which good people will fay, ay, if we . could but fee Chrift looking upon us, though it were but through the Lattice, yet we should rejoice, but we cannot discern that show shall we know that Christ through the Lattice looks upon us? indeed Hie labor, boe opus eft. I answer generally, They had need have a good and diffinct knowledg of their Friend; that will know him at a distance and only looking out at a Lattice. It is the same case here. The Soul that hath not a diffinguishing knowledg of its Beloved and his influences, will hardly know him through the Lattice. The Hypocrite calls Nature Grace, and the child of God is often in an Errour on the other hand, and will have the effects of Grace to be but the workings of Nature. Now until the Soul can be made to diffinguish these, it will never be able to difeern Christ through the Lattice. See the Church Lam. 3. 23. It is of the Lords mercies that we are not confumed, because bis compassions fail not. If you look into the former part of that Chapter, you will fee it was the time of Gods absence as to his Church :

Church's he was but looking through the Latters upon it, but the Church knew him at that view; because the had learned this. That it was of the Lords mercies that the was not confumed. So David Pfal. 119. 92. I bad perifhed in my affliction, if thy word had not been my delight. David faw God through the Lattels; he faw that but for him, he had perished in his affliction; it is our weaknels, that we can fee nothing of the prefence of God with us or the kindness of God to us, if we see him not in those influences. ves and degrees of influence too, in which we look and wait for him; Christ had looked upon Peter, though the fruit of his looking was not Peters Triumph and fulnefs of Comfort, but only a weeping bitterly, Luk, 22. 61, 62. If the Servants of God during their time of affliction, do but find the influences of God keeping up their Spirits, that they do not defpair, nor cast themselves wholly down; and keeping their Spirits in any order, that they break not out in impatience keeping up their faith, and keeping alive their hope, Christ looks on them though it be through a Lattefs. Oh! Learn to know Christ at this view, give me leave to tell you, it is a great Art, and that which but very few learn, It will be a great comfort to you, and that which many want; it will be an excellent foundation of duty and teach you to Glory in tribulation, and in all things to give thanks.

3. Branch.

2. Doth Christ look upon his people through the Lattesses of Ordinances? Oh! Learn to prize Ordinances, they are Christs Lattesses, they are the Souls perspedies: they are Christs Lattesses, through them, our absent Saviour looks upon our Souls: Whish we in the state of mortality are absent from the Lord; they are the Souls perspectives, through them the Soul looks up to Christ. It will be a sad thing to see a blind before these windows, but it would be sadder, if the Souls of Gods people should despise them because they are but Lattesses. They are but Lattesses, therefore rest not in them, but look through them: they are Lattesses, yeaChrists Lattesses, therefore prize them, use them as such, and be thankful to God for them.

2 Branch.

Thirdly, Doth Christ many times look upon his Sponse through the Lattess? Take heed of narrowing the Lattesses. This is done by our voluntary Sinnings; these narrow Christs Lattesses, they make Christ strates his influences upon his Spouse, yea and they straiten the Souls view of Christ. The Soul that bath sinned looks up to Christ with an unbelieving eye, and seeth him but

with a very narrow eye; he that is most holy seeth most of Chiss, and Christ looks most upon him, see Job. 14. 21. He that bath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and be that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest my silfes him; mark it, not look on him through a Lattes; hut manifest my self to him.

4. Laftly, Doth Christ when he is not in the house of his Spoufe, vet thew himfelf to her at the Lattefs? Oh! Let this learn us in all states, in all conditions to be looking unte Tefus the Author and finisher of our faith; he looketh upon us in a way of mercy: Let us look up to him in a way of Duty. When he cannot (injuffice and wifdom) behold us fully as at former times. vet he will look through a Lattess to us a when we cannot in way of Duty look up to him, with that Freedom, Liberty, Com fort. Incouragement as at former times; yet let us look to him, though it be through the Latters of an afflicted, dark, and imperfeet condition, and through the Latteffes of poor brokens imperfect Duties; though we can bot look up in a Prayen with a Sigh, a Groam a Tear, yet let us look he looks upon us through the Lattel's: Let us through our Latteffes look up to him. But thus much is sufficient to have sooken both to to this Proposition and to this Verfe.

3. The argament if which to had a

i. the superdiments were removed a this is he can under their Metaphocical expullions: The remove is pair, the leafure can en-

2. Misbings were on far which might in the ben I his is sit out in those other Meisphurical expections, lection our a first, e-tired. The building of firmers, the finging of binds our surface, the plants the property of which succentiles, the plants the wine first first our side of the control of the cont

ng of my Text weared inquire,

under thefe terms doils, our away.

3. What the trime or flore is that is here represented to us under give motion of the time when the fluvers appear, the first fing the faute of the tartle is beard, the Eigenra his Jamera, and the Verse find finite two deep grapts which gives a good so the arto are first.

My beloved spake and said unto me, rise up my Love, my fair one and come away; for lo the Winter is past, the Rain is over and gone. The Flowers appear on the Earth, the time of the Singing Birds is come, and the voice of the Turtle is heard in our Land. The Fig. tree putseth forth her green-Figs, and the Vines with the tender Grapes give a good smell. Arise my Lave, my fair one, and come away.

Pat these four verses together, because having the same beginning and chaing they plainly appear to make but one and the same intrice sense. The first words let you know, that they (as to the most part of them) are the Spoules repetition of the words of Christ. As no the form of his words, they plainly appear an exhortation; in which you may consider:

days The sitter which her! beloved gives her? My Love, my fair

The things to which he calls or exhorts her Arife, come a-

3. The arguments by which be moveth, or perswadeth ber. They

are reducible to these two heads.

1. Her impediments were removed; this is set out under these Metaphorical expressions: The winter is past, the Rain is over and

gone.

a. All things were present which might invite ber. This is set out in those other Metaphorical expressions, setting out a spring-time. The budding of flowers, the singing of birds and turtles; the plants bringing forth fruit, The Fig. tree and the vine: for the understanding of my Text we must inquire,

1. What that motion is to which here Christ exherts his Sponse;

under thefe terms Arife, come away.

2. What that time or fate is, which is expressed under the noti-

on of Winter, and a time of rain.

3. What that time or state is, that is here represented to us under the notion of the time when the slowers appear, the Birds sing, the voice of the turtle is heard, the Fig-tree biossometh, and the Vines send forth tender grapes which gives a good smell: as to the first,

1. What is that motion, to which here Christ exhorts his Spouse, either the Church of the believing Soul, under the Notion of, Arife

and come away.

1. The term Arile, relates either to fitting or lying profirate; we must therefore suppose the Spouse, either east down or at least fit down, and hindred from the enjoyments of her beloved as at former times. The Spoule fometimes fits downs by a carelels fecurity, through her own default not enjoying that communion with her beloved which the might or ought to do; and when the is in that fit of fecurity, it is Christ that must quicken her, according to that of the Apostle, Awake then that sleepest, arise and stand up from the dead, and Christ shall give the light; and of this Ainsworth understands the Text. The sense which Bernard of old put upon it, is not much differing : It is, faith he, Stimulation charitatis folicitantis fratrum falutem amulari. A quickening up of Christian Charity in us, in relation to the salvation of our Brethren. We may fay it is an exhortation of the Spoule, quickening her up to the exercise of all her Graces, as to which the had been affeep. and in the exercise of them hindred, by some temptations, defertions or the like. Thus the voice of her beloved was to this fense. My Love! my Spoufe! thou bast been for some time dull and dead, and beavy in the exercise of thy Grace, thou bast been bindred. through thy own corruption, through Satans temptations, through my absence from thee; but now Arife.

2. Others interpret it concerning a state of perfecution, and outward afflictions, thus the learned Mercer : Fam fatis te domi continuifti, et ob vim perseguntionumlatitafti. Fam libertas tibi restituta eft. figna jam falutu undig; apparent : id quod per figna Veru que fub jungit intelligitur. Potes in publicum prodire, in propatulo comparere, nibil jam adversariorum mine et oppressiones timende. He paralels the Text with that, Ifa. 26.20. Come my people, enter into thy Chambers, and bide thy felf for a little moment. The time of Persecution is a fleeping time to the Spoule of Christ; a time when the is as one in bed, in the fecret chambers of divine Providence. To this fense the Caldee Paraph. applies it, interpreting it with relation to the bondage of the Tews in Egypt. According to this Interpretation the fense is this : My Love, my fair one! thou hast been a long time cast down, and under the power of thine enemies; thou hall lien amongst the pots long enough: Now the time of darkness is over with thee, I have reftored thy Liberty, thou mayest now

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come

come out and appear again. Arife my beloved ! But there is not

only Arife, but also come away!

3. Bernard observes that Christ here doth not fay vade but veni. he doth not fay ee away! but come away! but the note is of no value: the word is 77' which fignifieth to go, to malk, to go forward &c. it is the same word which God used to Abraham, when he bid him go out of his Country. There's only this to be noted, it is a word of motion, and fignifies some motion of the Spoule. The following words signify a passage open for the Spouse to her beloved: These words are an invitation to make use of it. In the Heb. it is קומי לך: Arife to thy felf, and אים: Come away to thy felf: That is for thy own good and advantage (as Mr. Ainsworth interpreteth it.) The Spoufes approaches to a nearer communion with her beloved, are always for her advantage; the is not in them profitable to her Maker. God is happy in himfelf, and a fufficiency of happiness to himself; what we do of this nature is for our selves. for our own profit and advantage. Mercer thinks the particle is redundant. Thus I have opened to you the first thing. Christ by this Exhortation to his Spouse, calleth her out of that state of finful carelefness and security, in which she was not enjoying that communion with God which the might and ought to have done too, a more diligent and free communion with God. Or else he inviteth her out of those lurking and hiding places, in which she hid herfelf during the time of her Perfecution and Affliction, to a more free and open communion with Christ in his Ordinances; he doubles the Exhortation to thew Christs earnest ness with his Spouse for it.

2. Qu.

For the explication of the Text is, what state of the Sponse that is which our Saviour here represents under the notion of Winter and rainy weather. The Winter is past, the Rainy Weather is

gone.

1. You know Winter and Rainy meather are times when friends much keep at home & enjoy not one another as at other times, and fo in general these terms signific such a state, wherein the Spouse of Christ could not, or at least did not enjoy, such communion with God as she ought to enjoy. The particular Soul hath her Winter. The state of nature (of which I find some interpreting the Text) is a Winter, a time indeed when the elect Soul hath no communion with God, but lives as others without God, without Christ. A state of affiction is a Winter, of what kind soever the affiction

afficion be, especially if it be inward, from Sasans temptations, di-

2. The Church hath also her Winter and rainy measher. The time of perfection and affliction to ber is her time of Winter, and much hinders her in her communion with God. Now this is the Argument that Christ useth to his Spouse to perswade her to Arise and come aways because the Wenter was gone, the rainy measher was near, those things were now removed, that hindered the Spouses communion with her beloved.

What that time is that is in the Text, represented to m under the notion of the flowers appearing, and the time of the finging Birds being

come. &cc.

Here are in the Text five expressions; all which signific the same things, that is summer is come: Summer is known, 1. By the appearing of slowers. 2. By the singing of Birds. 3. By the voice of the Turtle. 4. By the blossoming and bearing of the Fig. tree, 5. By the Vines sending forth Grapes, which give a good smell. In short this phrase notes: It is now a fit time for thy coming, fit for enjoyment of communion with God; and wherein thou hast all the sweet incouragements imaginable to it: So much may serve for the the explication of the terms of my Text. Take the sum shortly.

My beloved spake and faid to me! " All you that belong to me, " whom I have made Beautiful, and chosen as the objects of my "Love, whether you be united in the Societies of Churches, or "confidered as fingle Souls. We have indeed been like friends. " whom a Winter or time of rainy weather have kept afunder, that "we have not had that fweet confrant and uninterrupted commu-"nion which we ought to have: you were by nature children of " wrath as well as others; and you have had your hours of Temp-" tation, Defertion, Affliction, Persecution, prevailing of Corrup-"tions, &c. In which you and I have been much strangers: you "have both wanted opportunities of, and incouragements to a "communion with me: But now I have brought you into a bet-"ter flate; I have called you out of darkness into marvelous "light; I have rebuked your tempter; I am returned to you in the "influences of my Grace. I have reftored you my Ordinances and your Liberties. The voice of my Prophets and Ministers is heard again; you have what you would; O now Arife! from your fecurity, your afflicted flate, and more mperfect communion with

Kk 2

me, and while you may come away to the freer, and fuller enjoyments of me and my Grace. This is the substance of what she heard her beloved say; From the words thus opened, we may

raife divers profitable Observations.

Though the Spouse of Christ may sometimes not hear her beloveds voice, or if she hear it, it may be a terrible sad voice unto her; yet she shall hear him again, yea and hear him speak comfortably to her. The Spouse here after her hour of sadness, after her seeing him with an eye of Faith, only at a distance and seeing him but standing behind her wall, at length she hears him speaking comfortably to her in the words of my Text, Arise, &c. I heard my beloved speak, saying, rise up my fair one, &c.

When the Spouse of Christ is hindred by a Winter, nipt with the frost, waster with rainy weather; yet she is Christs Love, his fair one still; her external accidents, neither divert the Love of Christ,

nor yet make the Spoufe not beautiful in the eyes of Christ.

It is Christ alone that can fay to people, in their fallen state by nature, or under backstidings, or under any outward miseries, Arife. I say none but he can save and help them: None but he can say, Arise and come away. But I shall handle this last.

The Spouse of Christ in this life will have a variety of states, some of which will be like the Winter, and to rainy weather, in which she cannot enjoy her beloved as at other times.

This Winter and rainy weather shall not less always. The Churches and the believing Soul's winter will be gone, her rainy weather will be over.

When it is with the Spoule of Christ, as it is with the Earth in fummer-time, that the slowers appear, the Birds sing, the voice of the Turtle is heard in the Land, the Fig-tree puts forth her blossoms, and the Vines wish the tender Grapes give a good smell: Then the winter is past with her.

Lastly, It is the special will and pleasure of Christ, that at such a time when the Winter it past, and the rain is over and gone, his Sponse should arise and come away. I will begin with the first of these. I cannot promise my self a Liberty to go through with all them: If not, it will be because the Text is not this day sulfilled; we cannot say, The Winter is past and the rain is over and gone: however I shall begin this long journey; if the rain overtakes me in the way, it will be time enough then to take house.

Though the Spoule of Christ may fometimes not bear her Beloved,

2. Prop.

3.Prop.

4.Prop.

5.Prop.

6.Prop.

7. Prop.

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voice, or if he bears is, is be saide bor a terrible voice; yes the field bear bine again, yes and bear bine speak confereably to ber.

By the Spoule I fill understand either the particularly believing Soul, or the Church, the true Church, which is a collective Body or Society of Believers. The Spoufe of my Text heard her Verfe 8. Beloveds voice before, the heard him speaking, but not in speaking particularly applying himfelf to her. The former-verses had represented her Beloved at some distance from her, though drawing nigher and nigher yet unto her; but here the hears him Speaking to ber. My Beloved (faith the) fake, and faid unto me, av. and he foake comfortably to ber. God fometimes is filent unto bis people, fometimes worfe than filent; he fpeaks, but he fpeaks terrible things : he faith unto him Leammi, you are not my people. Or, as he did to the Jews in the Book of Fudges, Go ery unto the gods whom you have ferved, and fee if they can deliver you in the time of your tribulation, Jud. 10, 14. but I fay he will speak, yea. and he will speak peace. Let us but consider how God foeaks unto his people. There are three ways by which God fpeaks to his people.

1. First, He speaks by bis Word. This is indeed most property speaking. Now the Word of God is either the written Word, or the Word opened or preached to bis people. The holy Scriptures are the Word of God; their holy and heavenly matter, the Authority which they have upon the Conscience, &c. do speak them to be indeed the voice of God. By these God hath spoken to his Church, though in various degrees for many years. The Jews of old had Moses, afterward they had Moses and the Prophets: we have superadded to these the writings of the Evangelists and of the Apostles, and by them the Canon is sealed, nothing is surther to be added to those holy Books: But the Word is a dead Letter

in itfelf.

2. God by bis Word speaks by the lively voice of his Servants, the Ministers faithfully severaling the mind and counsel of God to his people. Of old he spake by Prophets and Priests, under the Gospel by that order of men which are called Ministers, to whom he hath said, Go, preach and baptize: and of whom he hath said, He that beareth you beareth me, and be that despises we me, first me, suke so. 16. In this sense it is true.

1. That God fometimes fpeaketh not to bit people. In Summer's

time:

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Pialm 74. 9.

2 Chron. 15.3, time there was no open Vision. Before Afa's time Ifrael had for a long feafon been without a seaching Prieft, and without the Law. In Abab's sime, Elijah complained that he was left alone. The Pfalmift speaking of the time of the Babylonish Captivity, cryes out. There is no more any Prophet, neither is there amongst us any that knoweth how long. Amos prophecied of a time, Amos 8. 11. 12. When God would fend a famine of bearing his Word, and when men should wander from Sea to Sea , from the North to the East, and (hould run to and fro. to feek the Word of the Lord, and (hould not find it.

2. There may be such a time when God may by an External Ministry speak to his people, but speak very sadly and terribly. So he did to the Tems of old by his Prophets that foretold the Captivity of Babylon, and by his Apostles, yea by his Son foretelling the destruction of Hiernfalem. So he did to Hezekiah by Ifaiah. The Messengers of God must be faithful, and truly deliver their Masters will. Ez. 3. 18. When people are wicked, and God in his Word faith, they shall die; they must give them warning, or they must answer for their bloud; Samuel must tell Eli truth, let it be never to terrible, and let him be never to good and pious.

But 2. The children of God shall thus hear God speak comfortably again. Isaiab was a terrible Messenger of God in many parts of his Prophecy : but Chap. 40. 1. he had a Commission too which ran thus, Comfort you comfort you my people, faith your God : Speak you comfortably to Hiernfalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that ber iniquity is pardoned. God will speak unto his people again by his Ministers : ay, and they shall speak comfortably unto them. But this is but the first way of Gods speak-

ing in the External Ministry, and by his Word.

2. A second way of Gods speaking to his Beloved, is by his Spi-This speaking is by way of Impression, more close and particular than the other. God by his written Word and by the minifiry of it, speaketh generally to his Church, and to all to whom the holy Scriptures, or the publick Ministry of the Word, doth come. By his Spirit he speaks more closely, and particularly to the Souls of his people by way of fecret impressions, good motions and suggestions to the inward man : Now as to this way of speak. ing alfo.

1. God may be filent to his Peoples Souls, not speaking that peace, that frength, that comfort and encouragement to his peoples

Souls

Souls which he hath formerly done: and this is that Soul-defertion which the Saints of God are capable of, of which I have had often occasion to speak, and many of Gods people have had, and

have fad experience.

2. God may thus speak to his peoples Souls, but speak terribly. There is a spirit of bondage as well as a spirit of Adoption, a spirit of Conviction, as well as a spirit of Confolation. Gods people may have without fightings with men, and within fears and terrours, and these sears and terrours not arising meetly from melancholy, or from the affrightments of Sathan, (as they oft do.) but from the Holy Spirit of God pursuing these means, to humble and cast down a Soul, and to make it learn to prize and value the sense of Gods Love. But I say, These Souls that find this shall also hear their Beloved speaking again comfortably unto them. God will not utterly for sake, nor always for sake, there shall be again a time of Love, when he will speak comfort & peace to them.

3. A third way of Gods speaking to his people is by his Providence. Speaking is a means by which we let others know our mind. Now as God by his Providence may let his people know his mind, fo he is faid by it to speak. The voice of the Lord erieth to the City, bear you the Rod, and who bath appointed it. The Lord answereth his people by terrible things in righteonsness. The Thunder and Lightnings and other terrible works of God in nature. are called by the Pfalmift the Voice of the Lord. Now thus indeed God always fpeaks to his people, for his Providence is never idle. but ever working. But I fay, God sometimes speaks terribly, but though he doth fo, yet he will again speak comfortably. Thus you fee the sense of the Proposition, and it is true in all these fenfes, and it shall be true to the end of the World. Give me leave to evince the truth of it to you. I. from an Evidence of fact, shewing you that this God always hath done. 2. From some Promifes fecuring you that thus God will do unto you.

I. It appears from Evidence of fall, that God hath thus done always; and Solomon tells you, That the things which have been shall be, and there is no new thing under the Sun. God never had any people in the world, scarcely any particular souls, to whom at some time or other he hath not been silent, or to whom at some or other he hath not spoken terribly. I might here run through the Scripture and tell you of the Jews: God seemed for many years to neglect them, they were under bondage, and they had

no Messenger of God to declare the mind of God to them; but at last he spake comfortably to them by Moses and Aaron, and by his following Providences. All the while they travelled in Egypt, though God spake to them by Mafes and Aaron, yet as to his Providence he fpake terribly; all that time they wanted any fixt place for Communion with God, they had not Circumcifion, nor the Paffeover, &c. But God spake comfortably again to them by Johnsh when they came into Canaan: All the time of the Judges he feemed almost filent to them, his Providence spake sometimes terribly, fometimes comfortably. In thort, run on the whole flory of the Jews, you will find it true in all the tract of Gods dealings with them : He that hath made Day and Night , Summer and Winter to follow one another by a never-failing Covenant and Order, hath also fo done by his people. I might fay the like concerning particular Souls : Look upon Facob, David, Fob ; In thort, all the Servants of God, whose story is any thing largely recited in Holy Writ.

2. And as this hath been Gods method of dealing with his people, so it shall be his dealing, he hath secured it by his Promise. All those places of Scripture, which mention the Assistions of Gods people but momentary and short, make good this Proposition, He will not always obide, neither will be keep his anger for ever, Pfalm 103. 9. His anger endureth but for a moment, -- weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. Psalm 30. 5. Lam. 3. 31. The Lord will not cast off for ever. He retained not his anger for ever, because he delighted in mercy, He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us, &c. Ez. 16. 42, 43. Fer. 3. 12. and so in

many other Texts.

The reason of this Proposition lies in that tender Love which God bath to his people: and therefore in all the fore-mentioned Texts (almost) you shall find the Lords grace and mercy and compassion given as a reason of his gracious dispensations. Gods kindness to his people is such, that all his ways to them must be mercy and truth, his very Afflictions to them are in mercy and love, that they might not be condemned with the world, that their Iniquity might be purged, that they might see, &c. And his mercy constraineth him to remove their Affliction, and again to speak kindly unto them, lest they should put forth their band swearied through long temptations,) and do iniquity, or less that their spriss should fail before him. But I will not dwell longer

upon

upon the proof of fo plain and obvious a point as this is.

The proper Use of this point is of Exhortation; To all that sear Use 2. the Lord, to believe and to wait: Shall the Spouse (though her Beloved be silent at present) hear him speak? though he speaks terribly at present, yet shall she hear him speak comfortably again? Shall she hear him say, The Winter is past, the rains weather is over and gone; Arise my Love, my sair one, and come away? Let every Soul then that claims this Relation learn these two things.

1. To believe. By believing I understand two things :

I. The Souls firm and fixed affent to this as a Proposition of Truth. This is the great duty of Christians, and such as every one flatters himself with the performance of it; but indeed did but Christians believe these and such like Propositions, their affent unto them, if true, and full, and certain, would have another manner of influence than we fee in mens conversations, and there is nothing more evidenceth the falshood of our hearts in our profesfions to believe, i.e. affent to Divine Propositions, than that they have no efficacy upon our lives. Did Christians believe that they shall hear the voice of their Beloved again, would they be so full of dejections, and of dead despondencies of Spirit? would they presently give up all their mercies and comforts for gone, and when we go about to comfort them under their defertions and temptations and in their dark hours with the promise of God, &c. would this be our answer? Oh, but many good people, many Churches of God have been a long time forfaken, &c.. These and fuch-like voices of despondency either speak no Faith, or at least but a weak Faith in the very Proposition of Truth. Is not this the reason of the unfixed, unestablished hearts of Christians, that in an hour of darkness they are so unresolved what to do? Oh that we did but all believe thus far, what quiet, what fettlement and establishment would it create in our Spirits? what resolutions not to run away from God, nor to be filent unto him, nor to speak unadvisedly with our lips, 2 Chron. 20. 20. (they are the words of Jehofaphat,) Believe in the Lord your God, fo shall you be established: You have the contrary in Efay 7.9. If you will not believe, you shall not be established. It is our unbelief in the Word and Promise of God, that in troublous and unsetled times keeps us with unfixed and unfetled hearts.

2. Secondly, By believing I understand a fiducial adherence to, a trusting and depending upon the Lord; this indeed would fol-

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low upon the other, 'tis a natural branch from that Root : he that believeth fixedly, that his Friend however he hides himfelf and lowreth at prefent, yet will be kind again, will most certainly if need be depend upon him and trust in him; and the reason of our distrust and despondency is nothing else but our not affenting, or very feeble affenting to the Promises of God, which must be the foundation of those fiducial acts. Secondly,

As the truth of this Proposition calls to the people of God; 1. For a believing aftent to it, (a duty which every rational Soul ows to truth, and every Proposition of truth) 2. And the Nature of the Proposition calls to all the people of God for a fiducial adberence to, and dependance upon God, whom the Proposition concerns. So it also calls to the people of God for patience; 1. In the day when their Beloved is filent, or when he fpeaketh terrible things. I fay, when either of thefe times are, yet we are concerned, In patience to poffefs your fouls, because we shall hear our Beloved again. fay unto his people. The Witter is gone, the Summer is come. the Rainy weather is over and gone. There are many arguments to to evince Patience (under any affliction) to be the duty of Chriflians: fuch as are the Soveraignty of God, the Will of God, the Inflice of God, the Mercy of God which is mingled with every affliction. But the Nature of man is weak and defires ease and reft, and peace, and deliverance, and nothing lefs will ferve him: and therefore this Argument, viz. the affurance that the dark night will have on end, is an argument best fuited to our infirm natures. Is the Lord (at prefent) filent to his Churches or to the particular Souls of his people? do they not hear him, or do they hear him

their dark hours. 1. In patient Suffering, Submitting to the Will of the Lord without grudging, murmuring, repining, fintul fitugglings : See the Church, Micab 7.9. I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I bave funed against him, until he plead my ounfe and execute judyment, be will bring me forth to the light, and I fall behold bit righmonfress ; her affurance that God would bring her forth to the light made her resolve till that time to bear bis indignation.

by his Providence, or otherwise speak terrible things? Oh, let them learn in Patience to poffest their fouls, and in patience to fpend

2. In patient doing , doing what? the will of God concerning us. For this we had need of parience, for the time of darkness. is a time when we shall have great temptations to turn aside from

what

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what the Word of God, and what our own consciences tell us is our duty: you have need of patience to do Gods will; therefore our Saviour saith, (in the parable of the Sower,) That the good ground doth bring forth fruit with patience. Oh, be not weary of your duty, be not weary of any practice of holinels. For, Rev. 22.12. Behold, Christ cometh quickly; though you see himshot, yet, be cometh quickly, and his reward is with him, to give unto every in an according to his work.

3. Thirdly, Posses your Souls in patient waiting. This is nothing else but the exercise of bope in God under the darkest dispensations, be that believeth maketh not baste. A man may as to his Soul make haste when he casts away his hope, desponds, despairs; take heed of this, hope for that which you see not; let your Souls

wait upon God by an expectation of him.

4. Fourthly, Let me commend unto you a patient bearkening, Pfalm 85.9. I will bear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people. The Psalmists affurance that God would speak peace to his people made him patient to listen, and hearken, and hear what the Lord would say. Habbakuk was exercising patience when he was got upon his Tower, and was watching to

fee or hear, what God would fay unto him.

5. Lastly, Let me commend unto you patient praying; not only Prayer, but patient Prayer, when God is filent unto us, we must not be filent unto him : Efay 62. 1. For Zions fake I will not bold my peace, and for Hierufalems fake I will not reft. We ought to be filent to God as to the voice of murmuring, exposulating, repining &c. but not as to the voice of prayer too; we ought not to keep filence, no nor to be weary. David prays ftill, Pfalm 22; though be bad cried night and day before, and the Lord had not answered. This is that watching unto Prayer, that continuing and persevering in Prayer which the Apostle calls to us for; and our patience is shewn in it, and this is a great Argument for it to confider, that though our Beloved may sometimes hold his peace. and fometimes speak terribly, yet he will speak and speak comfortably. I shall conclude with the words of the Prophet Habbakuk, Chap. 2.3. The Vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie, though it tarry wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

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My Beloved spake and said unto me : Rise up my Love! my fair one and come away! For lo the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.

I Shewed you the connexion of these words the last day, and raised seven Propositions of Doctrine from them. The first of which (viz. That although the Spouse of Christ, may either not hear herbeloveds voice, or if she hear himmay hear him speak terribly; yet she shall, hear him speak again.) I handled the day.

The fecond was from the compellation: In Winter and rainy

meather, the Sponfe of Christ is yet his Love, and his fair one.

The third this, It is Christ and Christ alone, that can say to his

Spoule, rife up my Love! my fair one!

The fourth this; That the Spoule of Christ in this life hath ber Winter, and is subject to meet with Rainy weather: I shall change the order a little, and make the fourth the second.

2. The Spouse of Chrift, the true Church of God, in this life meets

with a Winter, and with a rainy weather.

3. Even in the time of Winter fhe is yet Chrifts Love and fair one.

I begin with the first of these two.

The true Church of Christ, and the truly believing Soul, in this life, meets with a Winter and with rainy weather. It was Gods word to Noah, Gen. 8, 22, while the Earth remaineth Seed-time and Harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease, and it is the statute of God concerning his Church. That while his Church remains upon the Earth, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night in her also shall not cease. In the opening of this point, I must enquire;

What is meant by the Sponfes Winter and rainy weather?

Why the Lord bail fo ordered it. Then I shall come to the Application.

What time or state is that with the Spouse, which is called her

Winter and Rajny meather.

It is a Metaphorical expression, and signifieth such a state as bears some proportion; and hath some resemblance with that time of the year, which we call Winter, and with rainy weather. Winter

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is you know that time of the year betwirt Autumne and the Spring. It is to be confidered, 1. In the Causes of it: 2. The

Adjuncts of it. 3. The effects of it.

1. The cause of the Winter is the distance of the Sun. The Sun moves yet in its ecliptick line, and gives its light, and sends forth some Beams, but its Beams come not so directly upon the Earth, and therefore give not so great a light, nor send forth such an heat as at other times.

2. The Adjuncts or properties of Winter are cold and rain. The Beams of the Sun are the cause of the heat of the Air, hence is the cold of the Winter, when those Beams have not so direct an influence upon us.

2. The Winter as it is a time of cold, fo also it is a time of rain, and frost. Hyens, and frost. Hyens, and frost it is u-

fual to have much rain in.

- 3. The effects of Winter, the withering and decaying of plants and flowers, &c. their leaves and greennels fails, they do not bud, nor bloffome, nor bring forth fruit; but, they are nipt, from the cold and frosts. So that Winter is that time of the year which through the absence of the Sun is more cold, more rainy and troublesome, and when through want of the influence of the Sun upon the Earth, the Herbs and Plants do not grow nor fliew forth their beauty, nor bring forth fruit as at other times. Rainy meather you all understand, it hath its use; but it is a time that hinders people from making visits to, and from injoying one another, and keeps people much at home. Now I fay the church of God. and the particular believing Soul, while in this lite, they also have their Winters and their Rainy weather; they have their variety of states, and God sometimes brings them into such states, that may be refembled to Winter and to Rainy weather : Well; but von will fay what is the Spoufes Winter - what is her rainy wea-
- 1. I find some here understand the state of nature. The Aposse saith, Epb. 2. 3. That those who are quickened by Christ, were once dead in trespasses and sins; and were once the children of wrath even as others. She that God hath chosen for his Spouse, and so is a Spouse by an eternal designation, by an eternal covenant, year and by purchase too, is yet a child of wrath by nature, until quickened by the Lord Jesus Christ, and married to him by faith; and this winter is not until (by effectual calling) the Sun of right counsels.

ailseth upon the Soul with healing in his wings. This time is fitly

compared to a Winter.

1. In regard of the absence of God and Jesus Christ from the Soul: see what the Apostle saith of this time, Eph. 2. 12. At that time (speaking of the Winter of their natural state) you were without Christ-without God in the world; there was then a Christ in Heaven, there was a God in the world: In the Winter there is a Sun in the Firmament, and it hath light in it and it doth send forth heat; but (in regard of its distance) those that are in a winter feel it not. So though there be a God in the world, and a Saviour of the world; yet men in the state of nature are without both, they have no Portion in God, no interest in Christ; they are like men in a Winter that seel little heat from the Sun, but are pinched with cold, though there be a Sun in the Firmament.

2. Look as it is in Winter, flowers do not Spring, Bud, Blossome, bring forth any fruit at all. So it is with men and women in a natural estate, there's no greenness, no beauty at all in them, they bring forth no fruit, their best works are but flendida peccata, gay sins; they can bring no fruit forth to the Glory of God; without faith it is impossible to please God; they are indeed in a worse state, than the herb is in Winter: the herb though it hath no greenness, no beauty at all, and though it brings forth no flower, no fruit; yet it hath life in it, there is life in the Root, which she weth it self when the spring cometh; but it cannot be so said of any Soul that is in a state of nature. The Apostle saith, Epb. 2. 1. you were dead in wesposses and sins, the Soul in this state hath no life in the root at all; its root is rottenness, it is dead there. But though this notion pleaseth some, yet I rather chuse with others to interpret it.

2. Of a state of affliction: Any affliction, by which either the beauty of the Church in general, or the believing Soul in particular, is hindered from its communion with Christ; either its external or internal communion with himseither his communication of himself unto her, or her communication of herself unto him; or by which the Church or Soul is hindered, from bringing forth that fruit to the Glory of God which she ought to bring forth: I say any such state of affliction, whether the affliction be more publick or those private, more outward or more inward, is the Spoules Winter and

Rainy weather: more particularly,

1. A state of persecution is the Sponses Winter. The time of publick sufferings to the Church of Christ, whether the suffers meerly privatively, wanting the Ordinances of God, not seeing ber signs, nor having her Prophets, or positively; this is a time of Win-

ter, and excellently resembled by this Metaphor.

1. For look as in a Winter, the Sun is in the Firmament fill, and moves still in its ecliptick line, only as a further distance from that part of the Earth where the Winter is. Sometime of persecution when God suffers the enemies of his Church to prevail against it, God is still where he was, he is in Heaven still, & going on in his gracious purposes, God at that time moves in his Ecliptick line which he bath by his eternal decree set to himself; but his wisdom guides him not to shew himself in glorious, pleasing, refreshing Instuences of Providences; his Beams are not so warm upon his people as formerly. They are (as the Apostle speaketh) persecuted but not for-suken.

a. Look as in a Winter, there is not that Beauty and pleasantness upon the face of the Earth as in Summer's The greenness of
the herb, and the Beauty of the Flower, and the variety of Fruits,
and the singing of Birds, all which are exceeding pleasant to the
eye, and to the ear, all these fail in Winter. So in a time of perseention in the Church, the staff call'd Beauty is broken. God hath his
Church still, but the woman is sted into the Wilderness, the publick
assemblies of their Church, their comely meeting together in the
Ordinances of God is hindered, his people are hid in the chambers
of Providence. Elijah is in his Cave and Obadiah bath 50 Prophets
more in another cave, the voice of the Turtle is not heard in the
Land; nor the voice, the rejoycing voice, of them that say as Isa.
2. 3. Come let us go up to the Mountain of the Lord, to the bousse of
the God of Jacob.

3. Look thirdly, As it is in Winter, the leaves falls off from plants, and Trees, only some Gummy plants keep their greenness, but the most trees grow naked: So it is in a time of perfection. The Drawgons tail, Rev. 12, 4. drew the third part of the Stars of Heaven, and cast them to the Earth. The greatest part of professors fall off like the leaves in Autumn, yea like wiripe figs, before the Winter Comes, yea many that it may be have more than an Hypocritical profession, look their leaves 5 possibly they keep their life, but they

fail in their Profession and Glory.

Fourthly, Look as it is in Winter, fearer any plant of the Winter

be not very kind indeed) buds and blossoms and brings forth fruit. We say the plants grow at the root, but they do not grow in the branches, they do not strust forth, they do not bring sorth fruit. So it is with the Church of Christ in the time of persecution, the lives but that is all. I may say she grows at the root, thence it is usually observed that after a Persecution, there appear more professors, more true Christians than were before it, but her growth is not seen; she doth not bring forth such open fruit as tormerly; the fruit of the individual Soul is one thing, the fruit of the church is another. Take the Church as a Collective Body, what is her fruit, but her publick praising and honouring God, publick duties and exercises of Religion, by which God is highly honoured in the world? Now I say this fruit faileth in a time of Persecution. This is the Churches Winter.

But Secondly, The believing Soul hath ber winter 200. Any state of affliction outward or inward, by which her Glory and Beauty is spoiled, or by which she is hindred from her duty, from her priviledg, in her communion with God; that's her Winter, and so

the believing Soul hath many Winters.

12. Any time of outward affiliations is a Winter, (indeed this is the gentlest Winter;) You know there is a difference in Winters, fome are very sharp, and kill plants, others are more gentle, the Sun is at its usual distance, but the Air (in regard of the wind, &c.) is so semperate, that many trees do bud, blossome, bring forth fruit, &c. So it is as to bodily afficients, they are the Souls Winter and do argue an absence of God, from the persons afficient insome degree; the presence of his Gracious providence is not with them, so as formerly; but yet as to their inward man they still find God strengthening, upholding, quickening, comforting them; and so though they cannot bring forth some fruit, yet their Graces bud, blossome, and they bring forth the fruit of Faith and Patience, as gloriously as ever. This is I say a Winter, but the best of Winters. Such are any Afflictions which only touch the outward man, and do not reach to the Soul.

2. Divine desertions make a Winter. This is indeed a sad Winter and properly so called the Lord Christ is compared to the Sun, and called the Sun of Righteonsness. Now when he withdraws himself from the Souls of his people, and moves at a further distance from them than at other times, that they find nothing of the consolations, or quickening influences of his Spirit, they feel

not their former wormth, life or best, this is indeed a fad Winter upon all accounts neither doth the Sun thine upon them as formerly, neither is there that pleafantness in their Souls as formerly. This is I faya very fad winter, neither do they grow in grace as formerly.

3. The time of Temptations is a Winter too : when they lie under grievous follicitations to fin against God, whether those temptations be ab extra, from their Adversary the Devil, who goeth about like a roaring Lion feeking whom he may devour, or from his inframents finful men in the world, by intreaties exhorting, by favours alluring, by frowns frighting them, to the ruine of their Souls, or from within: Ifay, let the Temptations be of what nature they will, they make a Winter in the Soul. Winter is a windy time, and temptations are like unto winds: Such a time I fav is to the Soul as a time of Winter. God at fuch a time is abfent from the Soul in some degree : the Soul at such a time wants les usual beauty & greenness, and looks like a plant shattered with boifterous winds which hath an ugly look, though it may not only keep its life, but its leaves also, yet it is thattered and ruffled with the winds. A Christian under violent temptations looks unlovelily. Thus I have shewed you what states of the Spoule these are which are not unfitly resembled to a time of Winter and Rainy weather. For the proof of the Point as to the 370, that it is fo, I shall not infift upon it. For that the Church of Christ may be in a state of persecution, or that particular believing Souls may be outwardly afflicted with diseases, loss of liberty, &c. Or Inwardly afflicted by divine defertions by diabolical Temptations. needs no proof. Let us only inquire the Wildom of divine Providence in this thing, and the reason of such dispensations why God is pleased to bring his people sometimes into such states as are resembled by a Winter and Rainy weather. In the general we must know and believe what the Pfalmist faith, Pfalm 25. 10. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto fuch as keep bis Covenant and bis Testimonies. It is for the good of his Spoule, that in the general: But more particularly, Let us but enquire the usefulness of a Winter and Rainy weather to the Earth and we shall gather fomething of the ufcfulness of these states unto the people of God.

1. By the Winter, the temporary annual plants are known from more constant plants that bave a more durable Ross. You have in the Earth some plants that are called annual plants, they last but for

wear, and then die other plants you have that are most lasting durable plants that have deep soots in the Earth. In Gods Soil which is his Church there are also annual plants, a company of Professors that shoot up apace, make a brave and glorious shew; but their goodness is like a meruing-dem that when the Son is up wanisherh : they have a temporary greenness, that's all : But there are others that have a deeper and more durable Root. Now the Winter diffinguisheth these in a time of persecution, you shall see all these die and fall away and those more durable and better rooted plants only live and hold. You are they (faith our Saviour, focaking to his Disciples.) that have indured with me in my tematations. The men of Capernaum were annual plants, they followed Christ for the Loaves, but when Christ came to his Cross you hear no more of them; only the true Disciples of Christ endure with Christ at that time. To this the Apostle speaks in I Cor. 11. 19. There must be Herefies, that they who are approved may be made manifelt amought you. Indeed the great discovery of Hypocrites shall be at the last day, but yet even in this life God will and often doth discover them, making them to walk naked, that all men may fee their frame; and this he doth by bringing a Winter and Rainy-weather upon his Church.

2. Secondly, By the Frosts of the Winter and the bard meather the weeds are chanked and hindered, that either they come not up at all. or if they come up, the Care geta the fart of them. The Lords Soil (the hearts of his people) is also subject to weeds; now the Winter kills them. In a time of liberty and prosperity the people of God are ready to grow loofe and wanton, to divide and featter to run into several parties and factions. The best of people are ready to grow loofe & wanton, but now the Winter kills thefe weeds at least many of them; the winter of Persecution will do it as to the Church. Those that slighted Ordinances will then prize them those that undervalued, those that came in the name of the Lord, and brought the truths of the Lord, because they were not of their perfuafions in all things, will then fay, Bleffed is be that cometh in the name of the Lord, I must again mind you of that excellent Text, Elay ag. o. Speaking of the Afflictions of Jacobs By this (faith the Prophet) frall the iniquity of Facob be purged; and this shall be all the fruit, to take array his Sin when he makes all the flones of the Alter as chelk-flones that are besten to pouder, the groves and

she images shall not stand up.

2. By the Rain and Snow of the Winter , the Earth is manured and made more fertile. Husbandmen rejeyee in the Winter-Inow, they think it manures and fats the Earth, if it doth not that, ver it binders the cold winds and frosts from killing it. Afflictions have the fame good influence upon the Spoule of Christ: they make the Church, and they make the particular Soul more ready to bring forth fruit; Pfalm 119. 67. Before I was afflicted I went aftray, but now I bave kept thy word. Heb. 12, 11. No chaftening for the prefent feemeth to be joyous but grievous, nevertheless afterward it bringeth forth the peaceable fruit of righteoulness, unto them which are exercifed thereby : Mark the term afterward, the good of the rain. and the fnow in Winter is not presently seen, but it is seen afterwards. Afflictions are profitable, ver. 10. for our profit that we might be partakers of his bolinefe; but the profit of them is not presently seen, but it is seen afterwards by the fruit of holiness. that is by them improved. So also some particular offlictions (as the Snow keeps the Corn from the harm that Frofis would do it.) do also deliver the Soul from some temptations, which else would have a far-greater power upon it.

4. Lastly, The Winter doth give liberty to the plant to grow. more at the Root : were it not for the Winter the plant would wholly spend itself in sending forth buds and leaves, and blossoms and fruit &c. but now the cold of the winter restrains it, and by that means it enlargeth itself and fastneth better at the Root. It is fo with Christians, whiles it is all Summer-time with the Church. a time of prosperity and liberty with the Soul. The Soul spends itself much indeed in outward publick exercises, but it exerciseth no patience, and but little faith; but now when it is a time of Winter the Spoale thriveth more inwardly in the fecret exercises of Grace; and thus God makes her restraint of outward liberties to turn to her exceeding great advantage, to make her grow in the radical graces of faith and putience, &c. This is a large Field of discourse, and I must straiten my self: these may be some of the reasons why it pleaseth the wife God that his Spoule should have a Winter as well as a Summer, rainy as well as fair weather. Let me apply it.

In the first place then let me speak to you in the words of the Use.

Apostle Peter, I Res. 4. 12. Beloved, think is not strange concerningabe fiery Tryal, - as chough some strange thing had before and
to you. Think it not strange if you also meet with Rain in your

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journey to Heaven, if a Winter overtakes you as well as others of the people of God; think it not frange because it is no new thing. That God who hath ordained that as long as the Earth remains, cold and beat, fummer and winter shall not cease, hath also ordained that whiles his Church remains, Summer and Winter shall not cease there neither. What the Apostle saith of himself is true of all the Church, and true of every believing Soul, I Thef. 3. 3. speaking of Afflictions, Your felves (faith he) know that we are appointed thereto, therefore he would have no man moved by his afflictions. The Winter is Gods Ordinance as to the world : the winter of perfecution, the winter of outward afflections, inward defertions is Gods Ordinance there too; if therefore as you have had a Summer, to God brings you into a Winter also, wonder notat it, God dealeth with you no otherwise than he hath appointed? no otherwise than he hath said, no otherwise than he hath deale with all his Saints and in all Ages.

Secondly, Learn as not to think it strange, so not to think hardly of God for it. You have heard that a Winter is as necessary for the Church and for the Soul, as for the Earth, and as the Earth and plants of it have a great advantage by the Winter, so also the Church and people of God have no small advantage from their Winters; they are by it manifested to be more than annual! plants, to have fomething more than the leaves of an outward profession, they are by it made more fruitful, Sin is kept down from getting the head against Grace, and over-topping the work of God in the Soul; they by it grow more in faith and patience, and improve more in those duties which are inward, secret and spiritual. Oh, do not think then the worse of God because of the Winter which he brings you under at any time : what wife Hufbandman would have all the year to be Summer-time? Ask the Country-man if he would never have Rain nor Snow? we fay it is pity that fair weather should do hurt, but it is most certain that too much of it will do hurt, and that frost and snow and rain are every whit as useful and conducible to the ends of the Husbandman as fair weather is. It is as certainly true, that fuffering and perfecution, that outward afflictions and tribulations, that temptations and defertions are as useful to Gods ends, both in perfecting Holiness, and preparing the Souls for glory; as the fair weather of prosperity, and freedom from those sensible Evils are,

You have heard what is the Sponfes defliny, what is like to be ber

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list. God hath ordained her to a Winter, and the must look for Rainy-weather. Let us now enquire what is her duty upon the contemplation and confideration of this I will open it to you in

five particulars.

1. In Summer-time live in the view of your Winter. I call it Summer-time with the Church while the enjoys her Liberties, the Ordinances of her God in their purity and power, their Communion with God and their communion one with another. I call it the Summer of a particular Soul : whiles the Christian is bleffed with outward bleffings, whiles (as fob speaks of the wicked man) bis feed is established in bis fight, and bis off-fpring before bis eyes, bis bonfe is fafe from fear and the rod of God is not upon bim : bis bull gendreth, and faileth not, bis com calveth, and cafteth not ber calf, be fends forth bis little ones like a flick, and bis children dance, be takes bis timbrel and barp, and rejoyeeth at the found of the organ. Whiles as to his inward man, he doth not cry. My God! My God, why baft thon for faken me! but he can make answer to fuch as fay unto him, where is thy God become? whiles he is not crying out with the Pfalmift, Pfalm 88. 15. I am affilled and ready to die, whiles I fuffer thy terrours I am distracted, thy fierce wrath goeth over me, &c. While the Soul is not buffetted with Sathan but walks in a large place: I fay, whiles it is thus with you, live in the view of a Winter, do not put the evil day far from you : do not fay with Babylon, I shall fit as a widow, neither shall I know Esay 47. 8. the lofs of children: but live in the view of Winter, look upon all your outward comforts as fiding, dying comforts, upon your fpiritual mercies as fuch as you may come to want. A two-fold excellent fruit will follow upon it: 1. Ton will be mortified to the world and to the things thereof, you will be as if you possessed not, as if you had not those things which you have. 2. You will labour to improve your Summer-fruits to the best advantage, your Ordinances, your Liberties and your spiritual freedom to the best advantage.

2. Secondly, Do your Summer-work while your Summer lasteth. Solomon saith, To every thing there is a season, Eccl. 3. 1. There is a time to plant, and a time to plack up. There's an Harvest time, and there is a Seed-time, and both these must be in Summer. 1. Make use of your barvest-time, What is the Churches barvest-time? Surely the time when the enjoys the Ordinances of God in their power and purity, in their plenty, variety, glory. This is the Spoules.

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harvest. The seed-time was Christs, he sowed in Teares she reapes in joy. She enters into his Labours, while your Harvest-times sait improve that by getting the knowledg of God; increasing your faith in Christ; remember the words of Solomon, Prov. 10. v. 5. He that gathereth in the Harvest is a wife Son; but he that step-

erb in the Harveft-time is a Son that canfeth fhame.

2. Make use of your seed-time; Summer-time is both an Harbest-time and a feed-time, It is a feed-time, the time when the feed of Grace if ever must be sown in the Soul; the Scripture calls it the feed of Righteonfness, the Winter is coming, 'tis an ill time to fow feed in; we use to say that affliction is a time of great spendings but little gettings. It is a fad thing for the Soulto have that fairh and patience to get in a time of affication, which he will have need enough of to spend then. The wise-man adviseth in the morning to fow your feed; Christians! you have all a feed to fow, or at least a business to do to see the seed, the seed Grace and Regeneration be fown in your Souls . O do it in the time of Summer! The Winter comes when the ground will be too wet or too hard, the Soul will be either hardened with habitual customary finning. or the body too much exercifed with afflictions to fow the feed of Righteoufres. I have told you that I have often feen feed (before fown) coming up bravely in an affliction; but I never knew any teed well fown then. I know God can do it, but he doth not use when they have Moses and the Prophets; and despise them, to bring one from the dead, to make them to believe.

3. Pray that your Wintermay not be too sharp nor too long. A moderate Winter is for the advantage of the Corn, but if it be too sharp or too long it kills the Corn, or at least indammageth it. God hath therefore promised, that the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the Righteous, lest be put forth his hand to work iniquity; that he will not contend for ever, lest the Spirit should fail. Our Saviour speaking of an evil time, Matth. 24. 22. saith, except thase days should be shortned, there should no stess he faved; but for the elect sake, they shall be shortned. O pray that your Winter may be shortned! that God would lay no more upon you than you

shall be able to bear.

Fourthly, Make prevision for Winter; every good Husband and good House-wife do it; you will say what provision? I answer, what provision doth a poor man make for Winter? There are three things that he provides, 1. An House to bide his head in.

2. Closels and fuel to keep him warm. 3. Food se est and live

1. Provide your selves an Honse to hide your bend in; what hiding place? David tells you where this may be had, Pfol. 32. 7. Then our my biding place, thou shalt preserve me from trouble, then shalt encompass me with sange of deliverance. Again Pfol. 119. 114. Thou art my biding place and my soield, Is. 32. v. 1. It is said, A mass shall be an biding place from the wind, and a covert from the Tempest. This man is he that was God-man Christ Jesus: He hides us in the chambers of his secret Providence, Is. 26. 20. The Prophet-Zephaniah tells you how you shall get possession of this hiding place, Zeph, 2, 3, seek ye the Lord, all ye most of the Earth, which have wrought his judgments, seek Righteousness, seek Meckuess; peradventure you shall be bid in the day of the Lards anger.

A fecond thing which men provide for Winter, is Clouth' and Fuel to keep them warm, and to defend them from the injuries of Winter-weather. A Christians garments are his graces, Rev. 16.
19. we are bid to put on Christ, we put on Christ when we put his Graces on. The Apostie, Kpb. 6. compareth them to Armoni, the girdle of truth, the brest-place of Righteousness, the hield of faith, Eaith, Patience, Righteousness, Meckness, Hope; they will keep the Spouse warm in the Winter. There is a garment of joy and Salvation too, but that her heloved must bring her when the Sum-

mer comes.

3. A third thing which men provide for Winter is food to ear. It is written that the just shall live by Faith, but the truth is, faith is but the Spouses Instrument of eating the mord; especially the word of promise, is the food that saith freeds upon. By these things men live (saith Hezekiah) study the promises, search the Scripture for them. Lock them up in your Souls when your Winter comes, that you cannot live upon Ordinances, (the green and stell fruits of the Churches earth these will stand you in stead. I had perished in my affliction saith David, if thy Word had not been my delight.

Lastly, When the Winter comes, look that your root dolb not die; your leaves will, the Spouse in the time of her Liberty, and Prosperity, honours God by outward attending upon his Ordinances, going with the Mulritude, to hear, to pray, to praise. Now these are but a Christians leaves on at both but this summer fruit. In Winter these will fall off, a Christian will be stratued much as to

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this outward profession; look now that there be life in the root; see to your inward exercise of Grace, your meditating on God, your believing in him, yea and rejoycing too with Habbark, shough the Figures doth not blossome, and though there be no frain in the Vine; all these things will argue that there is life in the root, and that (as it is with the plant in the Winter) there's nothing hinders you from the same publick profession, publick owning the ways of God, but only the badness of the weather; and whensoever the Summer returns again (as the longest Winter ever was had an end,) you shall bring forth open fruit with more Glory and Beauty, and in more abundant plenty, because of your Winter; but this is enough to have spoken to this Proposition. The next Proposition will be for your Comfort.

In the worst Winter and most Rainy weather the Spoule of

Christ shall vet be Christs Love, his foir one, &c.

I proceed to the third Proposition; The Spouse of Christ in the midst of her Winter, and the worst of her rainy weather, is yet Christs

Love and bis fair one.

By the Spoule of Christ I yet understand, The Church, the srme Church of God, and every particular Soul that believeth in Christ; this is the Lambes wife, of whom Saint John speaks in the book of Revelations, the Bride adorned for her Husband, Revel, 21, 2. The Bride of which Saint John speaks with reference unto Christ,

John. 3. 29. He that bath the Bride is the Bride-groom.

By the Spoules Winter and rainy meather, I have already told you what I understand, viz. Any kind or degree of afficien, by which either the Beauty of the Church or particular Soul is spoiled, or her fruit hindred, or by which her communion with her Beloved, whether more external or internal is hindered, whether these afficients be persecutions in the Church, or bodily afficients, or divine desertions, or diabolical temptations. Of these things I have spoken before, that which I affect in this Proposition, is, That during these, the time Spoule of Christ, is yet Christs Love, his fair one: Here are two things afferted, I. she is Christs Love. 2. she is Christs fair one.

First, she is Christs Love: the Heb. word is the same which we met with, Chap. 1. v. 9. and again, v. 15. it is my when I first met with it, Chap. 1. v. 9. I shewed you that the word comes from the Heb. They which in its primary signification, significant to seed as a Shepherd seedeth his stock, and because Shepherds use

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See my Notes

friendly to affociate together, thouse in a fecandary fenfe it fignifieth friendly to affectate thence comes 7'Un a the-friend or affociate, which is the word used in the Text, and often in this Song, and I know not whether any where-elfe in Scripture in that fenfe. It fignifieth (as I told you then) any one that doth intimately affociate him or herfelf with another, and fo may be translated. My fellow my friend, my Loue; or by any terms of equivalent figure fication it is not material by what fuch term it is interpreted. I discoursed upon this Term largely then; and shewed you.

1. How Christ hath approved himself to be bis Sponles fellow and

companion.

2. How he appears to be her nearest friend, and declares ber indeed on Chap. 1.9.

to be his Love do to ave and at what the iff is fuch to her, in ber Winter, in her rainy meather .: Many maters (faith Solomon) cannot quench Love. It is true concerning that love which is betwixt creatures, but it is much more true concerning that Love which flows from God to the Creature. Afflictions are waters. God himself calleth them fo, If. 43,2, When thou passet through the maters I will be with thee and through the Rivers they fiell not overflow thee. These many waters cannot quench divine Love. The Church under perfecution, the believing Soul toffed with Temposts. Persecuted, groaning under outward miseries, nay when it is forfaken of God (according to that gradual forfaking of which alone it is capable,) when it is (through divine permittion) buffeted by Satan at his pleasure (as one would think) vet even at this time Christ is its fellow, its companion, its intimate and near friend. You read in Scripture as of a fallow-Citizen, and a fellow-worker and labourer, fo of a fellow-prifouer, Ariftarchus and Epaphras were both fo to Saint Paul Col. 4. 10. Phil. 5, 23. and of a fellow-fauldier. Phil 2.25, when the Spoule is fighting as a Souldier, wrestling (as the Apostle calls it, Epbel. 6. 12.) not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the Rulers of the darkness of this world, against Spiritual wickedness in high-places, Christ is then its fellow Souldier. When the Spoule of Christ is by the Sons of men made a prisoner a sufferer in any degree when like fofepb, Pfel 105. 24.17, 18. The is fold for a Serwent, and her feep are burt with fetters, and he is laid in Iran; yet even then Christ, is ber fellow, as her fellow- Souldier fo her fellomprisoner. The word I told you imported as a fellewship or partnerfbib

nership in any state; so also a nearness of Love and Affection; his heart then is knit unto her, he loves her with a love of benevolence, and will have a converse and communion with her. This I take

to be the full import of the first Term.

Secondly, The Proposition doth not only say that the is then Christs Love, but that the is his fair one also: "The Rife up my Love. My fair one. We met with the Term in the 8. 15. and 16. Verfes of the former Chapter, it is a Term by which the Hebrews ordinarily express Beauty; when I handled the ninth verse of the former Chapter, I largely discoursed to you concerning the beauty of Christs Spouse. I then shewed you that it was T. Not a corporeal but a Spiritual Beauty. 2. Not vifible to an outward eye. but to a Spiritual eye; especially to the eye of Christ. 3. Not a Native, but an adventitions accidental Beauty. 4. Not an artificial but a created beauty. 5. Not adherent onely, but inherent alfo. 6. Not's perfect Beanty, but yet, 7. A defirable Beanty. 8. A never fading Beauty. Now I fay that the Church of Chrift, even in the hardeft Winter and in the ralmy weather, yet hath this Beauty, and is in Christ's eye a fair one. It is true Affliction makes us black: Tob expressing a state of affliction, expresset it thus, my skin is black apon me, 706 30.30. And the Church, Lam. 5. To describing her flare of afflictions, faith, ber skin was black as an Oven; and in regard of afflictions the Spoule, Chap. 1.6, had faid, I am black, for the Sun bath looked when me; but every thing that is black is not therefore ugly, there is fometimes a comelines in blackness: The eye is black, but yet comely, the marble is black and yet it is comely. The Spoule of Christ may be black through offictions, and yet comely, and Christs fair one. Thave spoken enough to the explication of the point, I proceed to the Confirmation of it. 1. as to the tre, that it is fo. 2. Thewing you the grounds of it.

1. That Christ is the Churches and believers fellow-fouldier, and

fellow-prifoner in ber Winter.

2. That Christ is the Sponses near and intimate friend, in the time of her finer and Ruiny weather.

3. That the Sponse is exceeding fair in the eyes of Christ, even in

the time of Winter and Rainy weather.

1. That Christ is his Spoules fellow foulder, and fellow-prisoner; we wrettle (fifth the Apolle, Epb. 6.) but his whole trength, the next words tell you, see v. 13. Wherefore take anto you the whole Armer of God, &c. I know (faith the Apolle, Phil; 4, 12.)

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how to be abofed, to bunger and fuffer need, v. 13. I can do all things throng b Chrift ibat ftrengtheneth me. 2 Tim. 4. 16. At my firft answer no man flood with me, v. 17. notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and frengthened me ; you read of a militant Church, Ad. 9. refifting to blood, v. I. for Soul their advertiry breathed out flaughter against them. Christ was their fellow-fouldier, he fought with and for them and ftruck their enemy to the earth, w. Chrift commands his Disciples, Mar. 12.11. When they mere led and delivered up to Councils, and beaten in the Synagogues, and brought hefore Rulers for his name-jake, they should take no thought before band what to fpeak but what foever shall be given you in that hour that fpeak; for faith be, it is not you that fpeak, but the Holy Ghoft. In thort, All those Texts of Scripture which promise Gods help and affiftance to his Church or Servants, in any kind or degree of fufferings, prove this, that the Spoule of Christ is his fellow-fouldier. But I added more (though indeed that be included in what is already faid) that the is his fellow-prifoner. There are two Texts that more firially prove this, Hai. 62. 9. In all their officious be was Mided, and that Ad. 9. Saul, Saul, why perfecuteft thou me &

2. That Christ is his Spouse's near and intimate friend, even in the time of her Winter and Rainy weather. The notion of a friend, such a friend as may be called my Love, importeth (as I have formerly shewed.) 1. Affection. 2. Ingenuous Affection; where the party is not beloved upon any selfish mercenary principle. 3. Converse, communion, correspondencies, &c. I shall not need inlarge my self upon this discourse; for certain it is whomsoever he loveth he loveth freely, he cannot be profited by his Creature. Now that he doth mill good, and do good to his Church, and to the Souls of particular believers, in the midst of all their Winters, I have already proved while I proved to you that he is their compenion in Tribulation; that he strengtheneth, and comforteth them, and also gives unto them what to fay in an epid day; he succours the tempted, saith the Apostle to the Hebrews.

The third thing only remains to prove, nin. That at that time the Sponfe is Christ's fair one. There is a real heavity, and a relative Beauty, if I may so distinguish in this place one may be fair in the eyes of another, who in her self considered is not sair; but the Spouse of Christ even in the Winter and in Rainy meather, is fair, really, and esseemed so by the Lord Jesus Christ; she is sair in herself through Christs comelines put upon her and he esseemeth ber so.

Nn 2

To prove this I need no more than look over all the Scripture and thew you how God foeaks of his people in the time of their Winter. Job was in a Winter, Job. 2. 3. yet how fair was he in the eves of God .-- There is none like him (faith God) in all the Earth a perfect and an upright man one that feareth God and escheweth rust, and ttill be boldeth bis integrity, although thou movedft me against bim to defrey bim without a cause. Though Job had loft his Children and lott all his goods, yet fee how fair he was in the eyes of Christ's yea when the Winter was grown harder upon him, both as to perfonal affictions and divine defertions, and diabolical Temptations, and Tob had more than once thrank through the cold of the Winter; vet fee how God looked on him, Chap. 42. 7. he tells Eliphaz the Temanite that his wrath was kindled against him, and two other friends; for, faith he, you have not spoken the thing that is right, as my Servant Job bath. There was a Winter upon the Mraelites when they were in Egypt, yet at this time God calleth them, Exod. 4. 22. bis Sons, bis first-born, when Epbraim was chaftifed, Fer. 31. 18. yet mark what she was in Gods eyes, v. 20. a dear Son, a pleasant Child. When they were in the Wilderness they were accounted by God, Deut. 14.2. an Holy, a peculiar people above all the Nations of the Earth, a Special people above all the people of the Earth; but I need not inlarge upon the proof of this. I shall from reason make it evident to you it must be fo; if you please to consider these things,

1. That our God is a God that cannot by nor repent. The Apossele calls the promise an immutable thing in which it was impossible that God should Lye. This being granted which is effential to God, all those promises which God hath made, under persecutions, outward or inward afflictions, temptations, desertions &c. to affist, comfort, strengthen, be present with his people, or, those declarations of the Nature, the lasting Nature of his Love, they are all so many pregnant proofs of this Proposition. There are so many of them, and so obvious to every diligent reader of

the Scripture, that I shall not infist on them.

Secondly, It appears if you confider, that the reason of Christs love is such as holds to his people as much if not more in Winter and Rainy weather, as at any other time. The earse of divine Love is not to be sought out of the divine Nature. He loveth because he will love, and sheweth mercy because he will shew mercy. Because he loved thy Fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought themout of

Egypt

Egypt by his mighty power, Deut. 4.37. Criticks note that the Heb. word and amount, comes near to nan voluit: Gods acts of Love proceed from a root of Love in him, and the root of this Love is only the Lords good will, Dent. 7. 7, 8. The Lord did not So Pfal. 44. fet his Love upon you, nor chuse you because you were more in number shan any other people, but because be loved you be, he loved you because he loved you : now Afflictions alter not the case at all. I added. That the reason why God should love bis people, i. c. shew acts of Love to them, holds more as to a time of Winter and Rasny-weather than as to another-time; if you confider that all their Sufferings and afflictions are, 1. From God. 2. Many of them are for God: they are all from God. Is there any evil in the Gity and I bave not done it, faith God? All Afflictions come either from God as the efficient cause, immediately bringing them upon them for their correction or trial, or as a permiffive coule : he fuffers Sathan to winnow them like wheat. If an Husband hath made his wife miserable; surely he hath more reason to love her, not less because the is in that misery of which himself hath been the occasion. It is true, it may be faid here that the case is widely differing a for though all afflictions come from God, yet they come as the punishment of our fins and merited by us, and God bash no reason more to love bis people for urging his Justice so to deal with them. Sol. I answer, It is something that is said, yet not sufficient if you confider.

I. That Christ bath to his Sponse pardoned iniquity, and his Love

is with a Non-obstante to her failings and infirmities.

2. This being granted, the reason holds. So far as misery mas keth one more the object of mercy. If the goodness of God be such, that out of a free principle of his own will he hath resolved to do them good, yea notwithstanding their fins to do them good and to fave them. Then in reason, though their misery and affli-Gion comes upon them for their finfulfailings; there is the fame reason still for his love to them, and in this a greater, as their depth of Misery calleth more loud to divine mercy. 2. Many of their fufferings are for God, and for the name and truths of Christ, therefore in reason Christ should more love them.

Thirdly, It will appear to you that the Spoule at thefe times is Christs fair one; if you confider, That God doth not judge of his Sponfer beauty from her outward, but from her inward flate, a Sam to ar which afflictions do not make worfe. There's reason that he

who judgeth his Wife fair and lovely meerly from her complexe on, and the fymmetry of her outward parts, should judg her unlovely when a Confumption hath wasted her, the small Pox dea formed her, or fits of Convulsion drawn her natural parts out of their due order. But he that calls his Wife his fair One from the view of her Vertues, or the confideration of her fweet and ingenuous nature, bath no reason from any of these accidents to alter his terms to her. Christ doth not judg any people fair and lovely because they are in health and prosperity, nor for any outward thing, Pfal. 45.1. The Kings daughter is all glorious within. Nay more than this, he judgeth her fair for bis comelines put upon ber. He first calls her bis Love, and then his foir one, therefore his fair one, because his Love. No Soul then hath reason to doubt whether it be the object of Christs love, and fair in his eyes, yea or no because of a Winter, or Rainy day which are all things from without it. I have done with the Explication and the confirmation of the Point, I come now to the Application of it, only an Objection must first be an-I wered, viz. How is this confiftent with those many Texts of Scripture which speak the Lord angry and wroth with his people ? Sol. I answer, very easily. If you rightly understand that as Gods love is nothing elfe than his good-will and inclination to do good to bie people. So Gods wrath is nothing elfe but his just will to chaftife bis people : This is well enough confident with a radical love. An ad of wrath is confiftent with an babit of Love; yea it may be an act of Love. God is willing justly to punish his people, and in doing of it doth truly will good to his people, yea and doth good to them : He chasteneth whom be loveth, and scourgeth every one whom he receiveth, Heb. 12. But it is time I should come to the Application of the Point.

In the first place, by way of Instruction:

Observe here the difference, the great difference betwixt a flate of finning and a state of suffering, and how eligible the latter is before the other. There are two forts of Souls, may be faid to be in a fate of fin:

1. All unregenerate, unjuftified Soule, fuch as were never purged from their filthiness but as they lie under the guilt of all the fins they ever committed, so they wallow in the mire and dirt of daily fins, prefumptuous finnings against God. These men may have no Winter upon them, their houles may be free from fear, they may have no darkness upon their spirits, be under no violent tempta-

1. Use

tions, the Rod of God may not be upon them: yet take them at their best estate, Christ will never say unto them, My love, my fairemed let is not all their outward Beauty, Honour, credit in the World, nor all the affluence of outward blessings imaginable that can make them lovely and fair in the eyes of Christ, they are still new, filthy and abominable.

2. A regenerate Soul may be faid allo (though not in fo fad a fenfe) to be in affate of fin or a finful flore when it lieth under the guilt of fin unpardoned or goeth on in a course of fin not we pented of. It is true, this Soul may be loved with the love of Eledien, it may be justified, but though we say the state of justification is not repeated, yet the act of pardon, and of the imputation of Christs Righteousness must be renewed, and while it is renewed, Christ cannot in a full and perfect sense fay to the Soul, My love ! my fair one ! But a state of suffering is such as doth no Believer. hurt this way. The Church may be perfecuted; yet not forfaken; black through perfecution, and yet fair in the eyes of Christ. The palm 68. 124 Believing Soul may be afflicted, have fightings without, and fears within, and yet be fair in the eyes of Christ. Oh, how much do we all fland concerned to look to this, that we do not prefer finbefore suffering! fuffering spoils not a Christians beauty, fin doth. Suffering fpeaks not, that the people under it are not the children of God, but habitual wilful finning doth it. The Earth that is made moift by rain meerly falling on it from without, is not from thence to be concluded bad; this Rain may make it better, or help to evidence its goodness, which ele would lie hid. But the freming Earth, the Land that is continually spewing out filthy moiflure is never good. The finful Soul is a foewing Soul, continually throwing forth mire and filth; this is never good; but the afhided Soul is but like Earth upon which rain talls; the falling of the Rain upon it may make it better, or at least evidence the goodpels of it.

Secondly, Bearn hence the pure and free love of Christ the loves 2. Branche. not the Church for its outward Ornaments and advantages, not because it is fair weather with it; no in White, in Rainy-weather thin the Soul is his Love, his fair one. But I hasten to the other.

- gelled about every true Spoof of Christinio every study believing

To Against:

I. Against its own doubts and fears 100 to heart and

2. Against the worlds haired, reproach and form.

I. Against its own donois and feors. We are too prone to asgue according to Gideons Logick, if the Lord be wish me, why an I thus ? concluding to Gods love or hatred from our outward fate in the world, and concluding Gods estimate of us from his deatings towards us. So hard a thing is it for us to learn that of the Apofile, whom he leveth be abafteneth, and foreigeth every child whom be receiverb. The Wile-man rells us, that neither love nor batred are to be concluded from hence | comfort therefore thy felf with thefe words: It is true, my condition is very fad, the hand of the Lord is upon me as to my body, as to my Family, but yet I may be dear in the Eyes of Chrift for all this, I am buffetted with Sathans semprations, and my flate upon that account is very fad; but vet itis not Sathans malice can work me out of the heart of 'my Beloved. God hath forfaken me, I find not the frengthenings; quickenings, comfortings of his Spirit as at other times : well, but yet I may be his Love, his fair one for all this. David was fo, and Christ was fo.vet David cries out for himfelf, and in the person of Christ, My God! my God! why haft thou forfalten me? So that though a Winter, and the Rainy-weather of afflictions, defertions, temptations. &cc. may give a just occasion to any Soul that fears the Lord to fearch and try his ways, and to confider their flates, yet there is from them no just ground of conclusion against our

Grine affordeth comfort to the people of God against all other mens judgments and fayings concerning heal when the Lord hath brought her into her Winter; and Rainy-weather. It is an ordinary thing with men of the world to affield the afficied, though at be as far from Morality as Religion. When David is following Absalom, then Shimei curfeth; when he was in banishment, then riogard s they cry, imberein thy God become? The dogs that fawn upon a man in a Scorlet coat, if ever he changeth it for a beggars clock, it is ten to one but they bark and grin at him. When Michaiab the Prophet is under a Cloud, then Zedeliah the falle Prophet fmites him both with the hand, and tongue too. So doth Hans-Al . c . mich ferve Jeremiab. Two things you thall observe concerning the men of the world in the Spoules winter, is From het ill outward accidents, they conclude her frate like the Barbarians who

would

would needs perfuade their Brethren that Paul was a Murtherer because a Viper clave to his hand. 2. That's the time when they let loofe their tongues against them : But be of good comfort Chriflians! and let this comfort you, that at this time Christ owneth you as his love, his fair one. The foundation of comfort lieth here, That if Christians be approvable to Christ, 'tis no matter what the world thinks and fays of them. It is true, it is the duty of Christians as much as they may without finning sgainst God to lead a winning Conversation towards the most of men if it be possible to gain them: but if this cannot be, (as it is very hard when it is a Winter-time with the Spoule,) certainly it ought to fatisfie them, that God despiseth not the afflictions of his people. If the good-Wife hath her Husbands love, and he judgeth her fair, it is no great matter for others : With me, faith Saint Paul, it is a very (mall thing that I should be judged of you, or of mans Judgment, 1 Cor. 4.2.

In the last place, Let this mind you to take beed of judging the 3. Use Servants of God because it is Winter with them, or determining against them, because it is Rainy-weather. It is an irrational judgment, and an uncharitable judgment; Let Barbarians call Paul a Murtherer because of a Viper cleaving to his hands, and the Fews conclude Christ a Malefactor because he is delivered to Pilate, and icer both at him and his Father because he hangs upon a Cross. Take you heed of so judging: It is not suffering but sinning which spoils the Spoules beauty. She that at present is afflicted and toffed with Tempefts, may yet be so precious in the Eyes of God, that he may again lay her Stones with fair colours, If. 54. Pr.

and her foundations with Saphires.

Laftly, Is the Spoule in the time of her Winter Christs Love and 2. Branch. his fair one? How reasonable is it then that at that time and all times. Christ should be the object of ber love, and fair in ber eves. The person of Christ is out of our fight, but he hath yet an interest in the world: His Glory his Truths, his Ways, they are all pieces of Chrift, and the world hath as much malice against them as it had against him, whose image and superscription these things have. Oh! Let these things be pretious to you; be not ashamed to own the name of Christ, the Truths, the Ways of Christ, which way foever the winds blow, Rom. 1. 16. I am not asbarned of the Gofpel of God, faith Saint Paul, 2 Tim. 1. 16. The Apolile commendeth Onefiphorus, that be was not ashamed of his chain: certainly if Christ

be not ashamed of us in our Winter, we should not be ashamed of him in his Winter, not ashamed to profess and own his Truths, not ashamed to walk in his Ways. If we (any of us) be his Love, his fair one (let it go how it can with us in the world,) certainly however the world goeth with him, we should yet own the Lord Christ as him whom our Souls love, and his ways should be fair in our Eyes. But this is enough to have spoken to this third Proposition. I should now proceed to the fourth.

That the Sponfes Winter will pass, her Rain will be over and gone. (But I have no time to speak to that Proposition now, and when I shall I cannot tell.) If any ask when these things shall be? I must answer him in the words of Christ: Alls 1.7. It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the father hath put in his own power.

Can'. 2. 10, 11, 12. 13.

For lo the Winter is past, the Rain is over and gone.

TE are come to the first Argument, by which this excellent Bridegroom preffeth the Spoules Arifing; making bafte, and coming away; which I told you was drawn, a remotione impedimenti, from the removal of her impediments. The Winter. is past, the Rain is over and gone; the Snow and Frost, and cold of the Winter: The Rain and storms of it you know are hinderances of Friends intercourse and communion each with other. The Spoufe of Chrift (whether we by her understand the Church as a collective body, or the particular believing Soul,) hath her Winter and Rainy-weather, which hinder her freedom and communion with her Beloved; this Proposition I have handled. I am now come to shew you that her Winter will pass, her Rain will be over and gone, I shall not at present consider these words as an argument inforcing the Exhortation, (God willing hereafter we shall so consider them;) but at present I shall only shew you the transient nature of those storms, which the Spoule meets with.

Christ's Spouses Winter will pass, her Rain will be over and gone. By the Winter which the Spouse of Christ is exposed to, I

1. Prop.

have already shewed you is understood; 1. A state of perfecution, 2. A state of outward Assistions, 3. A state of inward Assistions, whether caused from 1. Divine desertions, 2. Diabolical temptations, 3. or ber own sad reservings from the prevailing of corruptions: how fitly all these are represented by the notion of Winter or Rainy-weather I have formerly shewed you. My business is now to shew you, That though the Church of Christ while militant in the world, is subjected to these impediments in her free communion with her Beloved, though the believing Soul is exposed to such incumbrances, yet they shall not be for ever; the Winter will pass, the Rain will over and be gone. I shall first shew you the truth of it that it is so; and then give you the reasons of it, and

lastly make Application.

1. Concerning Persecution. A bitter Winter, but yet the best of the Spoules Winters, for it only hinders our external communion with our Beloved; it toucheth not the Souls fecret communion with Chrift. The perfecuted Christian can have as close, as free, as intimate communion with God as he who enjoys the greatest liberty. Persecution hinders not the exercises of Faith, nor the breathings of Love, nor the complacency of spiritual Meditation and Delight in God; no nor the overflowings of spiritual joy. Paul and Silas can fing in Prison, and the Saints can suffer the spoiling of their goods with joy; 'tis one of the fruits of justification to glory in tribulation, Rom. 5. As merry (faith Ann Askew ready to be offered) as one that is bound for beaven. From the Delectable Orchard of the Leonine prison was Algerins his subscription to his Letter. This Winter will pass. It is indeed like a Winter fometimes longer, sometimes shorter, sometimes milder, sometimes sharper: but pass it will. The children of Ifrael endured such a Winter in Egypt; but it paffed away, their Adversaries were drowned in the red Sea. The three Children and Daniel endured fuch a Winter in Babylon, but that Winter paffed away likewife. The Apostles and Primitive Christians had a long Winter occasion'd by the Tems and the Pagan Emperours, but it paffed away: In thort, so have all these Winters in all parts of the Church. The Enemy hath had bis day, and his hour hath been the power of darkness to the Spoule of Chrift, but it is no more than a day. Affyria is the Rod of Gods anger, pfed against his own people when they prove an bypoeritical Nation, Efay 10. 6, 12. when the Lord hath performed his work upon Mount Sion, he will punish the ftout beart of the Kings

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of Affirid. He hath faid, The rod of the wicked foul not always reft

spon she back of the righteons, Pfalm 125. 3.

2. It is true also concerning the Winters of particular believing Souls. Afflictions in the flesh, hours of Temptation, hours of divine Defertion. (how fitly the notion of Winter agreeth to all thefe I have shewed you, and that the Spouse is subjected to them I have heretofore shewed yous) that these also will pass, that they will be over and gone Experience tellifieth. The Lord will not cast off for ever. Lam. 2.31. Pfal. 20. 5. His anger endureth but for a moment, in his favour is life; weeping may endure for a night. but joy cometh in the morning. The Apostle calls our afflictions light and momentany : For a small moment have I for faken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath 1 hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, faith the Lord. Observe the terms, A little wrath for a moment, for a little moment : but none of these afflictions being joyous, but grievous, a little time in them to us feems long; and we are too prone to think when this night cometh that it will never be light again. The Pfalmift cries out, Pfal. 77.7. Willibe Lord east off for ever and will be be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever, and will his promise fail for evermore? Besides. (therefore) the confirmation of this from Scripture and all Experience. Let me thew fome reasons of it which may further settle us in this persuasion and give us hope in a day of Evil. First, as to Perfeentions (which are the Churches Winter,) I shall shew you that not only the Truth of God stands engaged for the shortning of those times of bloud, and that Truth of God, justified by an uninterrupted course of Providence; but both the love of God, and his care for his people, and the justice of God against his Enemies will bring this to pass.

1. First I say, the Lords includence to, and care of his own people will enforce it. He hath said, Zeeh. 2. 8. He that tomebeth you toucheth the apple of my Eye: a man is tender of the apple of his Eye. The people of God are called his Children, his Servants, the members of Christ. How unreasonable is it to think that any should voluntarily subject his Children, may the members of his body to the violence and cruelty of strangers. A Father or Mother may suffer their Children to receive some little correction from strangers for their good, when either they have behaved themselves unbecomingly towards them, or have been any way rude:

a man may fuffer a Chirurgeon to put fome of his members to pain, for their good and advantage; but it cannot be imagined that a Parent should ever endure a stranger to be always beating his Children, nor a Chirurgeon always fearing or cutting his flesh; and can any one think that God should indure the strangers of the World, those that are his enemies as well as theirs, to be always wounding, and beating, hanging, and burning his Children; those of whom he hath said, that they are the Apple of his eye; whom he calls his fewels, &c. it is one thing to polish a lewel, (this the prudent owner may fuffer;) it is another thing to debafe it, and knock it in pieces; 'tis one thing to whip. and moderately correct a child, it is another thing to kill it, and always torment it. Gods chaftenings of his people are rooted in Love (whom he loveth (faith the Apostle) be chasteneth;) being bottomed and rooted in Love, they must needs also increase and grow up in Love, they must be measured and regulated by Love; Love will not suffer excess in punishments. Panlum supplicit satis eft patri. But this is not all,

2. Not only Love and tenderness in God, will make this Winter short, but also that care which he hath of his people. I shall instance in two things, wherein Scripture speaks of Gods care on

his peoples behalf.

S1. That the Spirit may not fail.

2. That they may not put forth their hand to commit iniquity.

First, I say that the Spirits of his people may not fail before him. As God will have respect to his own saithfulness, that it shall not sail; which he gives as a reason, Pfal. 89.33. why he would but visit their iniquities with rods, and their transgressions with stripes; so in assisting, he hath a care that his peoples Spirits shall not fail, Is. 57.16. For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth, so the Spirits should fail before me, and the Souls which I have made; and surther to consist you in this, This care of God, that the Spirits of his people should not fail before him, is not in him meerly sounded in his gity; but in the Zeal, which for his own Glory is inseparable from his most Sacred Majesty; for I do not understand by the failing of the Spirits of his people, the meer deliquia, or faintings of their vital Spirits; but the sailing

of their Spirits duty, and the homage which the Souls owe to God in their hours of affliction; for as with us, though our Children and Servants cannot do the fame work as they do in Summer, nor possibly so much work, yet they do us some work; so though the Spoule of Christ in her Winter, doth not ferve her Lord by the same exercises of grace as in her Summer, yet the hath a service which even then the performeth unto God. Then is the time when patience is to have ber perfed work, Jam. 1. 3. When the trial of ber faith appears more precious than that of Gold that perifheth, as Peter Speaketh; when she is to joy in tribulation, Rom. 5. to hope for that which the feeth not. Now God hath a great deal of honour from these exercises of grace; when Abraham believed in bope against hope, the Scripture faith be gave glory to God, and therefore the Lord will not fuffer the Spirits of his people to fail for this reason, that he may not lose his own Honour and Glory. Long afflictions tire and waste the Spirits of the people of God; We thought (fay the Disciples going to Emans,) that this should be be that fould have redeemed Ifiael. He in whom they trusted was in his Grave, (as they thought,) and had been there three days, they begin to fail, their believing was reduced to a thinkirg; hence God promifeth that he will lay no more upon his people than he will enable them to bear; that he will with the temp. tations give a gracious issue, &c. The best of Gods people are too too fhort-winded in their breathings after God, and we have an High-Prieft who can have compaffion upon our infirmities.

Secondly, That they may not put forth their bands to commininiquity. Long trials as they usually produce great abatements in Spiritual exercises, making, languishing Hope, weak Faith, and a fainting Patience, so they are temptations to sins. Oh, how many sad failings have hours of Trial produced in the best of Gods people! Now the Lord doth suffer some of his people thus to stumble and slide, that they may know that they are but men, and that those who stand had need take heed less they fall; but he will therefore shorten their hours of Trial, that they may not too soully fall, Psalm, 125. 3. The Rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the back of the Righteons, less the Righteons put forth their band unto iniquity; as Gods glory is concerned here again, for he is honoured by his Saints exercise of grace; so he is dishonoured by his peoples Sins, and more by the Sins of his people, than by those of other men. And thus I have shewed you the reasons on the behalf of the Church.

why her Winter shall be short. I shall shew you also reason on the behalf of the Churches enemies.

The reason f on their fide) is the excels of their wickedness ; and their particular rage in the executing of Gods pleasure upon his people. The Prophet Habbakuk in his fad reflection upon that which God was about to do, to destroy his own people by the Babylonians, breaks out into this expression, Hab. 1.12. wherefore doest thou look supon them that deal treacheroufly, and boldeft thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the mantbat is more righteous than bimfelf? This falleth out when-ever God giveth wicked men a power over his people; and ordinarily God so ordereth it, that perfecution is the complement of their Sin; and the time of persecution is the time which God chuseth to bring the wickedness of the wicked to a perpetual end, according to Davids prayer, Pfal. 7.9, Thus it fell out to the fews, both as to their Captivity of Babylon, and in their utter desolation, both by Titus and Velbasian, 2 Chron, 26. 16. They mocked his meffengers, and despifed his word, and misused bis Prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arofe against them, till there was no remedy. And as to their final deftruction, Matth. 29. 36. our Saviour affures it, They killed the Prophets, and foned them that mere fent to them, 38. Behold your bonfe is left unto you defolate. And the same may be observed of particular persons engaged in Persecution; usually God suffers them to run into that madness for a complement of their wickedness, before he intendeth to cut them off. Add to this, that it is rare but those whom God suffers thus to scourge his people, highly incensed God, by over-acting their part. God for this reproved the Ilraelites of old, 2 Chron. 28. 9. Behold, because the Lord God of your Fathers was angry with Judab, be bath delivered them into your bands, and you have flain them with a rage that reacheth up to Heaven. Observe that Text. God was angry with Judah, and God delivered them into their enemies hands; but he did not like this, that they should deftroy them in such a rage as they did. God being angry with his Church, and having at the same time also a design to punish a wicked Generation, may deliver his own people into their hands, fo as they may fmire them, but they must take heed how they do it. For when God hath made use of his enemies to chastise his people, he will most certainly punish them, If 10.12. Wherefore it shall come to pals, that when the Lord bath performed his whole wark upon mount Zion and upon Hiernfalem, I will punish the fruit of the strut beart of the.

the King of Affyria, and the Glory of all bir looks. God may give his enemies liberty to beat his people, but he will at length repent him of the evil, and be weary of that his strange work. Thus much may serve to have spoken for your confirmation, that the Spouses Winter shall over the Rain which God makes sometimes to beat upon her will be over and gone.

It is equally true concerning the Winter of particular believing Souls; whether we by it understand outward afflictions, or inward distresses, by reason of temptations or desertions; and the reasons are in part the very same. Gods Love and tenderness, to for and toward his people; his Love will not fuffer him to be always fmiting any particular member more than the whole body, and he hath an equal care of every individual Soul, as of the whole collective body of his people; and it is true that the Lord as well taketh care for particular Souls, as for the body of his Church, that their Spirits shall not fail before him, nor they have too great temptations upon them, to put forth their hands, and commit iniquity. I shall not therefore enlarge further in the Doctrinal part, but in a few words shew you how far this Notion may be useful to us.

This in the first place wonderfully commends the Love of Christ to bis Spoule. I shewed you when I handled the second Proposition. That the Spoule of Christ even in her Winter, in her Rainydays, is Christs Love and his fair one. I have shewed you in this Proposition, That her Winter will pass, her rain will be over and gone. What can more speak the Love of God to his fainting Spoule

than to tell her.

1. That when the is black through Perfecution and Affliction. yet even then she is comely, and then to tell her, that her Winter shall pass, her Rain shall be over and gone; what miserable creatures should the best of Gods people be, if their Rainy-times were proportioned to their hours of finning; when would their Winters pass, when would their Rain be over and gone, if God rewarded them according to their iniquities, and dealt with them according to their fins; but his ways are not as our ways, his thoughts are not as our thoughts. And in this God diffinguisheth the afflictions of his people, from his revenge upon his enemies : Hath be (faith the Prophet) fmitten yen as be bath smitten others? 'Tis true, finners in this life have oft-times a longer day than the children of light, a fhorter Winter, and leffer Rain? but their

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their Kiner will come; the florms of divine vengence will correlate show; it is possible in this life they may fee a Cloud (like Ababe) not bigger than a mans hand; but let them get up and make halfe out of their Tents of wickedness, before they die they will elfe fee it cover the whole Heavens; and when their Winter comes, when the Rain falls upon them, it will never pass away, never be over and gone. O Evernicy I dreadful Evernicy, how thould it strike through the loins of every Sinner! but this is besides my purpose.

Secondly. What a Bridle flould this be to the Trimmph which Sin. ners have in the blood and mifery of the people of God How Ordinary is this in the Tents of wicked men, the child of God rejoiceth not in their calamity ; but there is another Spirit in them. They pierced Davids bears as with a Sword when be fled, and they crived; Where is thy God become? Pfal. 42. 2. The Children of Edom cryed in the day of Hiernfalems Captivity, Race it, sace it, even to the ground Pfal. 137.7. but faith the Church, Micab. 7. 8, 9, 10. Refoice mot against me . O mine enemy, when I fall I shall arise; when I lie in darknefe the Lord shall be a light were me ; I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have finned against him, until be plead my cause; and execute judgment for me ; be will bring me forth to the light I and I foall behold bis Righteonfuefs, Then be that is mine entiny fhall fen is and fhame fhall cover ber which faid unto me where is the Lord thy God ? Now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets. The Triumph of bold and impudent Sinners in the oppressions and perfecutions of the Church, is truly the lang beer of fools, which the Scripture tells us is but as the crackling of Thorns under the past

Thirdly, What an incouragement here is to the militant Church to fight the good fight! The good fight that I mean against Sin. To chase rather affections with the people of God (as Moset did.) than to enjoy the pleasures of fin for a season. He that will live Godly in Christ Jesus (saith the Apostle to Timothy) shall suffer perfection: He hath not sate down and counted well, that both reckon'd his Christian life, to consist only of baleion-days. There's no year without a Winter, though some pass with milder Winters than other. Tis true there is a long Summer coming, which no Winter shall succeed, but this must be in our better Country, and is but matter of expectation to us, while we are on this side of Heaven. But, the Winter we shall meet with before that time shall pass away a a transfent evil should not sright us. If weeping comes it shall be but for a night, joy shall salute us in the morning. (If, saith the

Martyr) we have an ill break foft, yet we fool have a good fupper : what faid our Lord to his Disciples, could you not match mith me our bour? Fear not Christian, putton the whole armor of God, dans to own the truths and ways of God, and to tell a finful world. thou art & Christian; fear not that Winter, which will pass over. that Rain which shall be over; what Husband-man negleds to fow his feed because a Winter will come? what traveller refuseth to flie out because he hath the prospect of a showre? what Souldier refuseth his place because the Bullets will a little fly about him? all of them know these things are transient, and with that they incourage themselves, the Husband-man valiantly fows his feed, which he knows the frost and fnow of the Winter will nip and keep under, for he faith the Winter will over : The Traveller girds. up himself to his journey, though he feeth a shower. The shower faith he will over. The Souldier girds on his Harnels, though he knows he shall meet with a sharp encounter. He considers it will be but for an Hour or twosLet not the Christian be the only coward. Tis true a Winter will come, tis ten to one but in thy life it will come, yet fow thy feed of Righteousness for that Winter will pess too. Thou art a Traveller and haft a tough way to go; yet gird up thy loins. O Christian, it will be but a showre and over. Thou art Gods Souldier, appointed to trials and afflictions, do not quit the Field; because thou hast a view of an enemy, he waliant in Fight. because the time is short. The time of Fighting against Sin is short. Rev. 8. 2, 11, he that overcometh thall not be hart of the fecond deaths he shall cat of the tree of life, of the bidden Monns, w. 7. 17. hefhall have the white flone, the new name, &co.

Fourthly, Confider what a medicine here is for impatience. In patience, faith Christ, possesses : Oh, how hard a lesson is this to steeh and blood! we can receive good at the hand of the the Lord and not be thankful, but how hard is it to receive evil and not repine, and immune? and at least think; that God deals hardly with us, and that we have cleanfed our hands in usin? David stumbled at this stone, till he went into the Sanstuary, then he understood the end of the wicked (and all their realisions thoughts perish with them) cannot you watch with me one hour (salth our Lord) There are two arguments for watchfulness.

It is with me. 2. It is but one hour. Christians! they are many hours, it is a long eternity that you hope to live and reign with. Ghrist, having trode all his enemies under his feet? Cannot you watch.

watch, cannot you fuffer, cannot you fight with him one hour? It is with him, too with him she for him, because in the owning of his truths and ways was bim, for he that mocks and flouterh, and finites you mocks and floutes at Christ, he toucheth the apple of hiseye, O be patient crying out with that Emperour under your greatest sufferings, This is not creatily! The Winter, and the cold hips steff and blood; but his a transient winter.

5. Laffly, What on Antidote is bere against defpondency? and what encouragement for faith! It is our great infirmity that whereas we should live by Fuith, and not by fight we live by fight and not by Faith. Faith is the evidence of things not feen, the substance of things hoped for; we live perfectly upon what we fee, and judg of things meetly upon what at prefent we fee and feel. This is indeed the judgment of Children, but not of men, much less of Chri-Stians, not of men. Doth the Husband-man when it is Winter, fay it will never be fummer more; the Trees will never thoot more, the pastures will never return and be green more? doth he fay when it rains or moweth it will never be fair weather more? he bath experienced the contrary; befides this he hath the word of God that tells him, fo long as the earth remains; Summer and Winter, cold and hear shall not fall. Not of Christians; for they are particularly obliged to live by Faith. This is their hidden life, this is their peculiar living, by which they fland diftinguished from the World : The just shall live by bis faith, faith the Prophet) hath the Christian no word to trusteo no promise to live upon hath he no Scriptures fulfilled? Nay, bath he not the experiences of all the Church of Christ, all the Saints of God, whoever lived in the world, they all had their Winter, they all met with their Rainyweather; why shouldst thou think that God should after the methods of his providence for thee? or that his faithfulness, as to thee alone thould fail? Lift up your heads therefore for the day of your redemption draweth nigh.

6. What a Law should this lay upon these Sinners in the World, whom the Lord makes the rod of his anger! It is almost all the Service, that God hath from many in the world, that when he will use a rod against his people, they are ready for that work. It is the Devil that hath filled their hearts with malice, fitting them for this Service: God only takes off his restraint from them he doth but slip the Chain, and these Dogs naturally run at their prey, and

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worzey the Lambs of his flock. But certainly it would lay a litle Law upon the perfecutors bloody hands, if they would but confider this. That they cannot perpetuate the Spoules Winter, they cannot make her Rainy-weather eternal. The enemies of Gods people speak the language of Phorsob, Exod. 15.9. I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the Spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my Sword, my band shall destroy them. These are

the two things that perfecutors aim at.

Not the fulfilling of Gods will, the accomplishment of his pleasure upon mount Zion, (he meaneth not fo, faith the Prophet of the Affyrians) No. I will fatisfy my own luft fay they; but they are mittaken, this is not the work they are fent about : They are fent to accomplish Gods pleasure. Here are some disobedient Children, faith God, I am refolved they shall be corrected. Jaylor , take and scourge them; and when will their luft be satisfied? My hand shall destroy them faith Phorach. The lust of prophane mens malice is never latisfied without a final ruine of Saints; we will not leave a Puritan in the Country, this is their language. But aliter in celo ac in inferno de bac re flatutum eft; God hath other thoughts. The Sponses Winter will over. And to this let me add one thing more, it feldom goes over without the Ruine of the proximate canfes; God is just in what he doth, but man is unjust, man is cruel and bloody. The Ifraelites had a Winter in Egypt. The Winter went over, and the Rainy-weather past over Gosben; but it went over with the drowning their adversaries in the red Sca. The Ifraelites Winter was to pals over, If. 10. 12. but it was with the punishing of the front beart of the Affyrian; yea, and it is the drees of the cup of red Wine in the Lords band, which the wicked of the earth (hall drink, Pfal. 65. 8. See If, 51. 21, 22, 23. Hear now this (be speaks to the Sponse) Thou that art drunken but not with wine. Thus faith the Lord, and thy God, that pleadeth the cause of his people. Behold I have taken out of thy hand the cup of trembling, even the dreas of the cup of my fury ; thou shalt no more drink it again : Well, what shall be done with this cup ? I will (faith God) put it into the band of them that afflict thee, which have faid to thy Soul, bow down, that me may go over. O that the fools of this generation would learn and be wife; that they might not in their rage undertake what they can never accomplish, and a work in doing of which they will certainly perich. entitle On still to soles who botto

Long T. Atta. and C. Sugar, and C. Shuft on cold

and the minister of come the one type and the stands of the Cant. 2. 10, 11, 12, 13, 01 no man

My beloved fake and faid unto me, rife up my Love, my fair one, and come away; for lo the Winter is past, the Rain is over and

The Flowers appear upon the Earth, the time of the finging of Birds is come, the voice of the Turtle is beard in our land the Fig-tree putteth forth ber green Figs, and the Vines with the sender Grapes give a good smell. Arife, my Love, my fair one and come a-

M my last exercise, I promised you by commission from my Lord and Maffer, that his Spoules Winter should pals, the rainy-weather, which fometimes hinders fome degrees of her fellowship and communion with bim, (for all her communion with him can by nothing be hindred and interrupted,) should be over and gone. I shall in this teach you bow to know when her Winter is past, when her rain is over and gone; and that is, as my Text expresseth it, when the Flowers appear on the Earth, when the time of the finging of Birds is come. A point not unworthy of fome thort discourse. For though men know their feafons, and can well enough diffinguish betwixt Winter and Summer, Rainy and fair weather, as to their Bodies and outward concerns; yet we by experience find Christians not so able to discern, as to the state of the Church, or of their own particular Souls. The Proposition which Laminor. der come unto is this.

That when it is with the Sponfe as it is with the Earth, when the 5. Prop. Flowers appear, when the time of the finging of the Birds is come, when the voice of the Turtle is beard in the Land, when the Fig-tree putteth forth ber green Figs and the Vines with the tender Grapes give a good fmell; Then is the Spoules Winter past; then is ber Rainymeather over and gone.

By the Sponse you will remember we understand; the Church of God more generally, and every particular believing Soul; this minds us that whatfoever is here spoken is in a figure, that usual figure which we call a Metaphor. By the Terms Earth and Land you must understand, the Church and the Soul that truly believeth. By the Flowers oppearing, the Singing of the Birds, the voice of

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the Turtle. The putting forth of the Fig. tree; the smelling of the Vines with the tender grapes, are meant some spiritual things having some proportion to, and resemblance with, these indications of Summer. Now what these spiritual things are is the great business of our enquiry. There is a great liberty taken, (and for ought know lawful enough) by interpreters in the Exposition of these and such-like expressions: give me leave also to abound in my own sense. I must when Phave done prove the Proposition to you which resultes from my Explication, and if I do that you will be no loses, though I do not fall in with the particular notions of others in their Expositions of these metaphorical Expressions, in giving the sense of which none can pretend to infallibility. Two passages I shall apply to the Church: the other three to the particular Soul. The two passages which I shall apply to the Church are those:

1. The voice of the Turtle's beard in our Land.
2. The time of the finging of Birds is come.

Let us enquire into the meaning of both thefeE xpreffions shortly.

The first Question then here, What is bere means by the voice of

the Tuntle?

The voice of Mofer (fay fome of the Jewish Rabbies, who will allow no Churches but their own Synagogues, no Pulpits but Mofer his Chair, no Preacher but Mofer himself.). The Voice of God calling the people out of Egypt, and giving them reft in Cawasn with a Victory over their Enemies, (fay others of them.) Perhaps, (faith learned Mercer,) the voice of God calling from Heaven and faying, This is my well-beloved Son in whom I am well-pleafed, Vox divine Sapientia, the voice of heavenly wisdom, faith Origen, and to this fense we generally interpret this phrase. The Gofpel is freely preached and doubtless well enough; for whereas the voice of the Tursle here is mentioned as a fignum veris, a fign of the Spring, and the thing fignified by it must be some fign of Salvation, and fpiritual good. We are fure there is no greater fign of Salvation and spiritual good to the Church than the preaching of the Goffel, nor is the preaching of the Goffel unfitly compared to the voice of the Turtle.

1. For first, The Turtle is an barmless peaceful Bird, the birds of prey strike at it, and if they get advantage tear it at their pleafure, but that hurts none of them. Christ was the true Turtle, he who gave his back to the smiters, and his cheek to them who plucked

Efay 50. 6.

off the heir, who was led are lamb to the flaughter, and es, a freet Elay 53. 7. before the sheerers so opened be set his month, who when he may regist 1 Pet. 2. 23. led, reviled not again, when he suffered be threat ned not; and the Gospel, (which is the voice of shir Twele is the Gospel of peace too, Ephel. 6. 25. when it was first published you know the terms of the heavenly Host, Luke 2.14. On earth peace, and good-willsowards men. The true professors of it too are (like David, Pfalm 120.5.) for peace; however when they speak, there is a generation for war. The hirds of prey tear them, but they have learned to love their Mar. 6. 12. Enemies, to do good to them that hate them, to bless, and pray for them

that perfecute them.

2. The voice of the Turtle is vox gemebunda, a mournful voice. The Gofpel is the voice of the Turtle in this fenfe too; me presch Christ erucified, faith the Apostles is pox late to us as it brings us the glad-tidings of Salvation, but to Christ it was Vox Gemebunde being the product of his bitter passion; though the wine of the winepress be sweet, yet the labour of treading the winepress is bitter, and he med the minepress of his fathers weath alone; yea. to us it is Vox gemebunda too, a Turtles mournful voice. What faith the Gofpel? Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at band, Mark 3. 7. When the twelve were fent out shey preached that: men should repent; Mar. 6. 12: When the Apostles preached the Golbel, they preached. Repent and be baptized, Acts 2. 38. Rebent and be converted. Ads 2. 10. Now Repentance is a mounful tone. The voice of the Turtle is beard in our land. The preaching of the Gospel, calling upon, persuading, all men to repent and believe is plentifully heard in the Church.

2. The time of the finging of the Birds is come. This is the fecond phrase which I told you I should apply to the Church of Chaist, who are the Birds in that air but the members thereof? what is their singing, but the listings up of their voices unto God in publick prayer and praises? The time when the singing of the Birds is come, is certainly the time when the people of God have a liberty to wait upon him in his Ordinances, in his Temple to sing of his glory. Then they sing unto God, listing up their voice jointly unto him that inhabiteth the puaises of his people. Then they sing unto thomsalver, Psaku 122:1, 2. I was glod when they said unto me, Let us go up to the bouse of the Lord, our feet shall stand within the gates. O Hierusalem. The Lord never makes his people so joyful as when he carrieth them into the bouse of Prayer. And

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what if these birds be not all of one feather? what if they fing not all the fame notes? if they agree all in the fame end, if they all fing so the glory of the fame God. If they be all birds that fing, I mean true members of the Church of Chrift; if they all rejoycein the Lord, and fing forth the praises of the most High God, according to the grace given to every one of them; I know no reason why from their more general liberty to fing any should peevishly conclude the Summer is not come, or that the Rainy-weather is not past. I mean here by the finging of the birds, a more publick finging. In Cages you know they will fing in Winter and in the foulest weather; Gods birds will also fing in their winters. Paul and Silas fang in their Cages. They were evil times, Mal. 3. 16. When they that feared the Lord met often together, and Spake one to another, and the Lord bearkned and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before bim for thofe that feared the Lord, and thought upon bis name; and they were evil times in which the A. postle to the Hebrews, Heb. 10.25. charged the Hebrews not to for sake the affembling of themselves together. No times can be so bad, but these birds will in them sit (though in a Cage, though but by the fire-fide) and fing out the praifes of their Redcemer. But it is Summer-time when they may fing in the Sanctuary, in the affemblies of Gods people going with them into the boufe of God with the voice of joy and praife, with a multitude that kept boliday; when they have liberty to speak in the light, and to preach in the bonfetops, Mat. 10. 27. when what they have fooken in darknefs (hall be beard in the light, what they have fooken in the Ears in Clofets fhall be proclaimed in the bonfe-tops, Luke 12. 3.

Having opened these two passages, they amount to this, That it is the Churches-Summer, and brave weather with it, when the Gospel is freely and powerfully preach'd, and when Christians have liberty (not in cages and corners,) but in the open air, in the full assemblies of Gods people to pay those homages of prayer and praise

which they owe unto the great God.

The proof of this will be presently evident to him that consi-

dereth but two things :

I. That such dispensations of providence make the best of the Spouses year what is most sweet and most advantageous to ber. Summer-time (as you know) is both the time of pleasure and the time of prosis. It is in Summer that the fields do lough, and the Valleys sing, that the one is clothed with corn, the other with

grafi: that the Hurbandman and Fine-drefler gathers in the profit of his labours. And what is the pleafast and profitable time to the Chapeb, but when the Gospel is treely preacht, and the Servants of the most high God have liberty in their publick Assemblies to

meet, to hear his Word to pray and fing Praifes?

2. That is the time when the people of God have a freedom for fellowship with their beloved. The want of this I told you was here the chief thing confidered in the Metaphors of Winter and of Roiny weather, viz. the impediments which such scalons give to Friends visitings of and communion each with othersthey may indeed then visit one another; but it must be under some good protection of a Coseb, or the like, on with some great disconvenience, and difease to them from the cold, or from the most ture of those scalons. The Spouse in the sharpest hours of perfecutions will have her communion with Christ, and that not only her Closet-Communion, but so far as the may, a more social communion also. But yet 'tis Winter, the cannot do this, but either under some great protection, or without some great detriment and interruption. But when the cannot do this, but either under some great protection, or without some great detriment and interruption or detriment unto herself; then, if eyes, her Winter

is past, her Rain'is over and gone.

Thus I have spoken to those two passages which I conceive may be interpreted with a more special reference to the Church, which yes may be interpreted of the percenter Saul : the hath a Turile too, that comes and lings upon her boughs. The Chaldre Paraphrast by the Lande understands the halp Spirit; and we know he chose the form of a Done to appear and descend in upon our Saviour. We know likewife that as the Turtle is ouis migratoria, a Bird that leaves cold Countreys in the Winter, or at least lies hid in some place where the is peither heard nor seen : So the Spirit of Christ bath its hours when it either withdraweth from, or lieth hid in the gracious heart, when his voice is heard again strengthening quickening, comforting the Soul, then the voice of the Turtle is heard in our Land. The particular Soul bath her birds too. Members of the body, powers and faculties of the Soul, by and with which the glorifieth God. Thele Birds in Winter fing sat. The Pfelmit is fo troubled that be sannat fpeak; Pfal. 77.4. Haremembred Gad and mas troubled ; He cannot think of God without serrour, nor freen to God in Prayer, nor breath after God in a Duty, nor delight, nor rejayee in the Lord. Then is the Souls Summer when the tongue

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again can fing of the Lords praises, and pour out the Soul in spelications, when the meditation of God is sweet unto it, when it can breathe after, delight and rejoyce it self in the Lord. But it is time to pass to the other passages; When

The flawers appear on the Earth; The Fig. tree putterh forth ber green figs. The Vines with the tender grapes give a good finell, then

is the belleving Souls Winter paft.

1. The flowers appear on the Earth. There are four things remarkable in flowers, which comprehend the excellencies of that creature: 1. Their beauty, 2. Their finess finest 3. Their ufefulness, 4. Their variety. What can be meant by the Souls flowers, but either her graces, or her conforts. There is a variety of graces, an exceeding beauty in them: Graces and comforts both reflect a finest speed upon a gracious heart; their usefulness every gracious Soul knows, they are the principia hene operands, the habits of all good and holy actions; the roots from which all such actions proceed, as branches and finis; we all know that the appearance of the flowers is an indication of the Spring; the appearance of grace in the Soul is a figu her winter is past. In a time of Deserving, Temptation, &c. the flowers of grace are in the gracious Soul, but they do not appear; the root of the matter is in them, but the root sends forth no flower, at least none that appears much unto others; its when the Winter is past that the flower appears in the Earth.

2. The Fig-tree putteth forth ber green-figs, the Vines with the sender grapes give a good finell. All valuable Interpreters expound this of aftr of grace, (which we call good works) the fruits of faith, hope, love, charity, &c. You know God of old compared his anelent Spoule to a Vineyard, Efay 5. 1. and lookt it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes: what were the wild-grapes the brought forth , but fix and disobedience? what were the grapes the Lord'expected, but what the Apoftle calls the fruits of righteoughess unto boliness? And God expressing the wiekedness of men, Dent. 32. 32. expressed it under this Metaphor: Their Vine is as the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrab; Their grapes are grapes of gall, and their clufters are bitter, Oa. And Christ expressing the unfraitfulness of the Jews, expresseth it under the parable of the Fig-tree, to which he came three years expe-Ching fruit and found none. Now when the Soul is able to put forth itself in good works to bring forth fruits of righteoufness to the glory of God; then is the Summer come. Learn (faith

our Saviour) a parable of the Fig.trer, when the Branch yet sender is March 24.32. and patterb forth leager, you know the Summer is utght: But when the Branch is more confirmed and patterb forth fruit, you may know the fummer is come and the Winter is fully gone. Soit is with the Soul, when it is enabled through grace to do the will of God to being forth the fruits of righteoufnels; 'tis then Summer with it, the Winter is then paft, the Rain is over and gone. I need add nothing to what I gave you as the proof of the other part of the Proposition. What is Summer but a time, 1. of Pleasure, 2.of Profit. 2. a time fitting for the communion and converse of Friends. Now what can be a time of sweetness and pleasure? what can be a time of profit and advantage? what can be a time fitted for the Souls communion with Christ, if that time be not. when the graces of the Soul appear, and when it is able to bring forth fruits of boliness and righteon ness to the honour and glory of God? I shall now add no more to the Doctrinal part: the fum of what I have faid is reducible to these two Heads.

That it is then a summer-time with the Church, when the Copiel 1. Memb. bath a free liberty and passage, and the several members of the Church Prop. of Christ camet only every person upars, and every family apars pray to God, and sing of his praises, but in the Assemblies of Saints can without interruption and detriment meet together to pray and sing proise. The the sweet she church; the time when she will reap the greatest pross of Redemption. The time when she may have

most communion with ber Beloved.

Secondly, It is then a Summer-time with the Saul, when the 2. Memb. Graces of Gods most hely Sperit must eminently appear in her heart: Prop. and the fruits of Grace most eminently appear in its life and conver[ation.

These last passages might be applied to the Church also, the hath her slowers also, 1. Some newly come up of feeds, the immortal and incorruptible feed of God which abideth in the Soul, young

Converts appearing in the Earth.

Some old flocks, who have flood a long time in Code Garden, and have brought forth flowers year after year, who yet, in a Winter with the Church, may disappear. For as curious Florists house their choicest flowers in pots in Winter; so God calls his people in an evil time to enter into their Chambers (the secret places of his Providence,) and hide themselves for a little moment till the Indignation be over-pass. In Elisab's time you know God had so

housed his flowers, that Elias (who knew them well enough) complianed to God that he was left slove. Now when these flowers appear, when yong Converes appear, when old Professors durft openly thew their heads, Then the Sponfer Winter is post.

The Church also hath her Viner; (you know God calls for a

Vineyard, Bfay 5.) the hath her Fig trees; (the is the Lordr garden you know.) These Vines fend forth their tender grapes when they send forth the fruits of holiness. These Fig-trees send forth their green figs when they exercise good works ! "Is the Church the Vine? is the the Fig-tree? her grapes, her green figs then are the Children that in her are brought forth unto God; Bur I shall infilt no longer on the Doctrinal part's Tcome to the

Application.

Observe from hence (in the first place,) That it is now Sammer-time with us. It is one of the greatest infirmittee of humane nature, that we better understand our mereles by the want of them, than by the enjoyment of them: Like children we ery for bread, and when we have it we are not contented. God hath again opened unto you (this day) the preaching of the Gospel by your Pastors; not only the voice of the Tartie liatif been and (bleffed be God) is heard, but the volce of your Tarrier is heard; you have again liberry to hear your Pattors; The finging of the birds is come: you have been finging to God a long time only in Cages, and by your Fire-fides; the Winter hath been upon you, the Rainy-meather hath hindred your coming together of re dura, into the fame place to worldip God. Now this Winter is past, this Rain is over and gone. I befeech you understand your own mercies: Is the liberty too general? Suppose it, yet furely you have your mercy in it: Is it no Summer to the flowers because the weed also have a liberty to grow ! Is it no Summer when the melodious Birds may ling, because the warmth of it gives the Progs an advantage to make a more ill-lounding noise? For those who differ only in leffer things, but agree in the fame fordamental truths of God? what manner of foirtes are you of that would have them forbidden because they follow not us? affoon shall you fee all men agree in the fame lines of their face, as in the same Propositions of truth, and none have greater differences amongh them than those who are most zealous in prefence against differences in judgment. Mult only one fort of Birds fing in the Summer? what though we be all obliged to hudy, to food and think

1. Ule

think the fame thing; it is to be endeavoured indeed, but will hardly be obtained. So we are bound to findy perfettion in whire life ; but yet I hope there must be a room for these who have me attained. I am fure a time of Perfecution to the Chorch of Chill. is Winter, when it rains bleed and raine to men fearing God; it is certainly Rainy-weathers and if fo the law of contraries, a time of freedom from it, a time of Liberty to enjoy God in his Ordinances, without interruption, is a time of Summer to it. Our brethren may differ from us in fome notions of truth, and yet be one with us in Christ. Let us therefore own and bless God for the mercy which we this day enjoy (I am fure we should have done for not many moneths fince.) Bur I pass this branch.

This in the next place may correct the errors of many good 2. Ule. and gracious perfons; who have not fufficiently learned to diffinguilh betwixt a Summer and a Wester in their own Souls, and are ready to mis-interpret the dispensations of God unto them and to call it Winter and Rainy-weather, if they have not just what they would have at the hand of God. This Notion lets us fee;

1. That our Summer is not to be judged from Gods difpenfations to our outward man : Nor

2. From Gods lenfible manifestations to our inward man. The most of those who do err in this judgment of their state, and of Gods respect toward them cer upon one of these heads. Christ accounteth the Winter paft, and the Rainy-weather over and gone, when the Fig. tree putteth forth green Figs, and the Vine ber tender Grapes. The Notion Paim at is this, I bat if a Soul findest diverse influences mabling it to bring first fruit unto God, though it may want fome benigh providences to the outward man, and fome fenfible confolations to the inward many vet it frould not call its flate a winterflate. It is an ordinary course for Christians to judg therafelves from their experiences; and it is a good way of Judgment provided Christians do rightly observe their superieurs, and nor call thole experiences only, which are fenfible confolations, and the impreflour of fome divine word upon the Soul I would how be mittaken here, fenfible confolations are the fweetelt bleffings which a Soutis capable of, that lives not in the beafficial vision of God. But a Souls Salvation doth not depend upon thems nor is a judge ment of a Souls frate to be made up by them. If the Vine part firth its sender Grapes ; If the Fig tree pues forth ber Fige though it be but green Figs, yet the Winter is pall if God mableth a Soul to bring

Ob

Sol.

bring forth frais, was boliness. however he dealeth with it as to its outward man by his providence, or as to its inward man in respect of fensible confolations; yet its Winter is in a great measure past: Were but this Notion of truth well drank in by the Spirits of Christians, I know not any would more contribute, to the even and steady frame of sheir Spirits. But you will say,

Is not this for a Christian to Judg himfelf from his works?

I answer no. It is to judg himself not from what he bath wrought, but from what God hath wrought in him, and that Judgment is a true Judgment, 1 Joh. 3. 14. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren, 1 Joh. 4. 13. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us because he bath given us of his Spirit. Now the sruits of the Spirit are not only Joy and Peace, but also Lave, Long suffering, Gontleness, Goodness, Faish, Meckyoss, Temperance, crucilying the sless with the Assessment and Lustr, Gal. 5. 22.24.

But will a Christian say from what works, from what fruits, shall a Christian Judg how it is with him, and from what degrees of them?

I shall keep to the terms of the Text; and only say, If he puts forth Figs and Grapes, though they be but green-Figs and tender-

Grapes; yet they Speak a Summer in the Soul.

I fay first they must be Figs and Gropes. No man gathers thele, faith our Saviour, of Thiftles and Thorns, you shall observe in nature, there's hardly any fruit in the garden, but hath its counterfeit in the field. There are wild berreys that are good for nothing, yet look fomething like Grapes; the pleasant Apple hath the erab that looks like it, and doubtless the Fig hath some wild fruit that looks like it; fo it is the Heavenly fruit, There is a Roman fortitude which looks like Christian patiences a Moral liberality which looks like Charity; a Moral temporance which looks like a Christian felf-denial; an Hypocritical best which looks like an Holy Zest: a formal praying, bearing, which looks like the Spiritual performance of him who hath received the Spirit of Adoption, teaching him to cry Abba Father; but if you come nigh and look a little wiftly upon these things, you will see a vast difference. 1. A difference in the principle, the fpring which moves the natural man, is not Love to God, nor faith in his promifer ; but a natural Law, or some forcible principle of reason, or some opinion of merit, or fome fuch other thing distinct from Faith and Love. 2. They differ in the end. The Christian above all aims at the glory of God.

Obj.

The Pharifie doth it to be seen and approved of men, or to purchase Heaven; yes and could you see into the hearts of both these performers, you would see a vast difference in the manner of performance too, (but this is too large a theme for this place.) I say they must be Grapes and Figs, they must be true fruits of the Spirit of Grace, true fruits of Holiocis, growing out of a root of Fairb and Love.

2. Then (Secondly) though the Figs be green, though the Grapes be tender Graper, vet the Winter is gone, the Winter I mean of a natural flate; The Winter of a deep defersion, God expects not perfection of his Saints in this life, while we are on this fide of Heaven, our Flowers will not be full-blown, our Figs will be but green-Figs: our Grapes but sender Grapes. Some indeed will be riper than others, as they fland more in the Sun, but none full ripe, Judg therefore thy felf aright, O Christian! Look to find Graper and Figs upon thy Soul; fome Spiritual babits and actions upon those habits, which flesh and blood cannot produce; and if thou findest them hope well believe well condemn not thy self for want of other experiences. The Summer of the Text, is not described from the light of the air, or from the chearlines of the weather, or the Triumph of the Sun in the height of the Meridian, but from the Figs and Grapes put forth, and from the appearance of the Flowers in the Earth. Is thy effate an afflicted state, from the frowns of divine providence upon the outward man, from the follicitations of Saran? doeft thou want fenfible confolations? well be it fo yet doft thou find thy heart by Love breathing after God, by faith hanging upon God, by patience waiting for God, not daring to depart from God, who hideth his face from thee; Thy Winter is in great measure past, the growing of the plants, and their fending forth fruit, speaks Summer as well as the glorious light of the Sun at noon-day. There may be indeed a partial de-Certion in the Soul that finds this, but it is the lightest and most tolerable. That Soul hath a great deal of the presence of God with it, that in an evil day is inabled to keep close unto God, not wilfully departing from him. The chearly merry Soul, may be miltaken and go to Hell at laft, but fo fhall an holy Soul never do.

Thirdly, Is it then Summer with the Church and with a Soul, 3. Ufer when the Flowers appear on the Earth, when the voice of the Turtle is beard, when the Fig-tree sendeth forth green Figs, and the Vine tender

Grapes?

what a militable Winter then is upon the greatest part of the

1. Oh; the milery of those places where the Gospel is not preached! O the milery of three parts of the Word! Asia, Africa, and America, (the greatest part I mean of these places); people that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. They (some of them) abound in Gold and Silver, but the riches of grace are not known to them; they abound in Silk and fine Linnen, but how much better were they, if they had Prophecying though it were in Sackcloth. How many thousand there perish for mant of Vision, how are they frozen to eternal death in these lands of planty. This same ovir migratoria the Turtle is shed out of those Lands. O pray for them that the Sun of righteousness may again arise upon them with

healing in his wings.

2. Oh the milery of iboulands and ten thousands of Souls among ft our felves! The Turtle is indeed heard in our Land, the Turtles that have been fo long thene fing again; but in how few pieces of our Earth, do the Flowers oppear? both few are our Fig-trees where me fee any green Figs? how few our Vines that bave tender Grapes? Are not our Vines as the Vines of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrab, are not our Grapes Grapes of Gall ? and our chifters bitter? Is not our wine the possion of Dragons, and the cruel venom of Afpes? The Weeds every-where appear in our Earth; Drankards anclean persons, Swearers, Blafphemers, Idolaters, Lyars, Chesters; these every-where appear in our Earth, but are thefe the Grapes that Zion bears? are thefe the Fruits of the Lords Fig-tree? The enemy hath fown thefe Tares. Ah themiserable condition of these poor Souls? It is a Winter, a dreadful Winter with them, they can have no communion with God? what fellewship bath light with darkneft! God with Belial Righteoufnefs with unrighteoufnefel Let not thesefore any unholy and unrighteous person flatter it felf, as if the bitternels of death were past with it. Let none think to lay with it felf. I have Abraham to my Father, I am born in the Church, I am baptized, &c. Thefe things are great priviledges, but before thy flare can appear altered to thee the Flomers must appear in the Earthyniflake not, no unholy, no unrighteous person, shall ever enter into the Kingdom of God; flew me thy faith by thy works; if it be a Summer-time with thy Soul, thew me the green-Figs, thew me thy tender Grapes.

Deut. 32. 32.

Laftly,

Lastly, Let this lay an ingagement upon you all, to do what in you lieth, that the voice of the Turtle may yet be beard in our Land. That the finging of the Birds may yet continue. That the Flowers may ap-

pear on the earth, &c.

1. Pray for the continuance of Gofpel-liberty. This you may do, this you have done, God hath heard you; O. pray, that the candlestick may no more be removed, that the Lord would no more turn the Labourers out of his harvest; yea and pray, That the Flowers may appear on the Earth, pray for the conversion of Souls. Tis little of Summer though the Sun shines, if the Earth be not thawed; yea and pray for the fruitfulness of Souls converted; what difference between Summer and Winter, if the plants only bring forth leaves and no fruit? The Churches Summer will prove at last, far worse than a Winter, if the fruitfulness of her

members doth not appear.

2. Do not think Praying enough. There must be acting too; walking in the Spirit, putting forth your felves in the exercise of those habits of Grace, which God hath given you, to facilitate Spiritual operations; certum eft nos agere quum agimur, faith Aug. when you are affed you may and you ought to act, you are all members of the Church, which is the Spoule of Christ, and are all concerned in ber felicity; you have heard this is her Summer-time, O fludy to prolong it, do what in you lies, by prayer and holy walking, that the days of her tranquillity may not be shortned, that the shadows of the evening may not be stretched upon her, nor the cold of another Winter return upon her; you know, her Summer is envied, her Winter is withed for, more Rainy-weather is threatned, and it may come. Oh! let no vapours from your Earth cause that Rain. No afflictions trouble us worse, than where our Consciences rebuke us for bringing them upon your felves. But I shall have occasion to press this and such-like exhortations more fully in my next exercise, where I shall-shew you.

That your beloved expects that at such a time as this when the Winter is past and the Rainy-weather is gone, when the Flowers appear on the Earth, &c. his Love, his fair one, should Arise, and

come away.

Cant. 2. 10. 13.

Rife up my Love, my fair one, and come away. Arife, my Love, my fair one, and come away.

Am now come to the Exhortation, which the Spoule heard her Beloved make unto her, repeated v. 10. 13. Arife, come away.

The fixth Proposition formerly observed by me from this Text,

was this.

That when the Lord in his providence, removeth his Spoufes impediments as to communion with himself and granting all due incouragements and advantages: He doth expell and require that she should

Arife, and come away.

I understand this Proposition, both concerning the Church in the general, and every individual Soul, for so I have interpreted the Spouse all along in my discourse: The Winter and Rainy-weather (as I have shewed you) signify the hindrances of this Spouse in her communion with her Beloved. The Appearance of the Flowers, the singing of the Turtle, the Fig-tree bringing forth Figs, &c. are all signs very, the signs of Spring and signify all encouragements to this communion. Now it was that the Spouse heareth the voice of her Beloved, Arise, my Love, my fair one, and come away. Hence I have raised the Doctrine to which I shall speak, 1. By way of explication. 2. By way of confirmation or reason. 3. By way of Application.

1. By way of explication we have to enquire,

What is here meant by Arifing and coming away. 2. Why the words are doubled, v. 10, 13. Arife, my Love my fair one, and

come away.

I must still mind you that by the Spouse I understand the Church, or particular Souls that are members of it. The Church is usually distinguished, into that which is invisible, and that which is visible. The visible Church we make, the whole number of persons upon the Earth by the Preaching of the Gospel, called out from a state of Paganism, to an outward profession of and submission to the Lord Jesus Christ. Which people as they be scattered into Nations or parishes, make National and parechial Churches, (that

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is parts of the Catholick Church there inhabiting) the invisible Church, are those who are not only called out of the Pagon world. but out of a finful world to true Repentance, and Faith in Jesus Chrift: These are partly in Heaven, Triumphant, partly on Earth. militant. In the Church invisible, there is no Soul in its natural fate; but it is otherwise in the Church visible. Now there is nothing more plain, than that God (for the fake of his elect in it) owneth the whole visible Church as his Spouse. It was to the whole Church that God by Feremy faid, Fer. 3. 12. Return you unto me .--- for I am married to you. This various notion of the Church gives Interpreters a great Liberty of abounding in Hof. 2. 19. their interpretations, both of this and other paffages in this Song.

Arife and come are both terms of motion. In every motion there is a terminus a quo, a term from which, and a terminus ad quem, a term to which, to be confidered belides the nature of the motion it felf, hence three questions are flarted, 1. from whence the thould wrife, 2, to whom or to what five fould come, 2, what ber coming is, I. From whence would her Beloved have her

arife.

Arise from the flate of moure. Though I do not think this prin- v. Guild- ad cipally intended, yet I find fo many eminent Interpreters infifting locupon it as I shall not wholly pass it over. Mr. Ainfworth paralel. Durham. ad leth this Text with Epb. 5.14. Awake those that fleepeft, and fland loc. up from the dead and Christ shall give thee light ; and Mercer agreeth that the Winter fignifics, Totum Superius tempus que fub morte farance or peccato faimus captivi. The flate of nature is not wafilly compared to a Winter as the Winter fignifieth a time when friends have little or no communion, at that time you were without God in the world (faith the Apostle Epb. 2, 12.) I am also fure that when the Lord affords the means of grace and conversion, repentance and convertion is then eminently the duty of all those that are within the pales of the Church, Ad. 17.30. And the times of this ignorance God winked at but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. This made our Lord upbraid the Cities of Corazin, Bethlaida and Capernaum because the Gospel had been preached among ft them. This is the condemnation (faith our Saviour) that tight is come into the world, and men love darkness more than light. I must confess I had some difficulty to allow this any thing of the fenfe of this place, till I confidered that God alloweth

the

the visible Church, the notion of his Spoule, Jer. 3. 14. in which there doubtless are many not converted, yea and many who are the Lords Spoule according to his purposes: though the time of special

Love be not come, as to their effectual calling.

Secondly, Arife from a state of security and cornality. This is a bed upon which the Beloved of Christ doth sometimes sleep: A flate of imperfection. This is the flate of every child of God, the state of Gods people is fometimes fuch, as they cannot have that communion with God they would; of this I shall speak by and by. But there is another time, when they do not enjoy that commurion with God they might. This is that I am now speaking to, the cause of which must be in themselves, they are too too secure, faving with David Plal. 30. 6. I shall never be moved; or the world with its profits hath too much divided them, or with its pleasures hath too much inticed them; we hear our Spoule crying out, I fleep. Their fleep indeed is not unto death, but yet their eves may be closed, they may not keep up their Spiritual watch as they ought to do. It was to his disciples that Christ faid, watch and pray; he knew we were inclined to fleep: Let him that flands, faith the Apostle, take beed left be fall. Those that so fall must arises yea and when the Lord makes their way plain, when he makes bis Sun to thine upon their Tabernacle, wheh he removeth his Spoules impediments, when he gives them all imaginable incouragements. The Lord expecteth they should arife. As Christ came not only that his people might live but that their life may abound, fo the end of preaching the Gospel is for the perfecting their Saints. Epb. 2. 12. perfecting their graces as well as perfecting their numbers. Sitting still doth not fit a Christians life (faith Mr. Ainfworth upon the Text;) they must run the way of Gods commandments; Pfal. 119.32. They muft follow the Lamb whitherfoever be goeth, Rev. 14.4. non eft in bac vita dinturnita otii (faith Bernard on the Text, though in a fense fomething different from this.)

Thirdly, Arise from a state of affliction and perfecution. Thus many interpreters carry it. Fam satis domi latitasti ob vim persecutionum, quasiam non sunt timendasjam libertas tibi restituta est, potes in publicum prodire, in propatulo comparere, nibil adversariorum mina timenda (saith Mercer.) Thou hast lien long enough amongst the pots, persecutions have kept thee in long enough; I have now restored liberty unto thee, thou mayest now come abroad, and en-

joy my publick Ordinances: be not now as in former times, I expect now more from thee, be not fullen now, lie not fill in thy corners: thy Pastots are removed out of their corners, thine eyes fee thy Teachers, do not shut thine own eyes. Thus much may

ferve for the first Question.

2. To whom, or to what should the Spoule come? 37 faith the Hebr. which some translate to thy own good, to thy own advantage : this in general, and indeed fuch are all Christs calls of us. We cannot be profitable to our Maker; Can a man (faith Eliphan, Job 22. 2.) be profitable to God, as be that is wife may be profitable unto bimfelf? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteons, or is it gain to bim that thou makeft thy may perfed? Whenever we arise from the grave of fin, or from the fleep of fecurity, we arise to our felves, the profit is our own : when we come we come to our felves: but this is but a general; and befides this particle may (as fome judg) be redundant, therefore I will not be too critical in it, nor lay much stress upon it. Whither then should the come ? 1. Come away unto Christ. 2. Come weto a further Vigour and perfection of Grace. 3. Come to publick communion with your Beloved. Let me focak a word or two to each of thefe.

1. Come unto Christ, you that are dead in sin, beer the voice of the Son of God and live; and thus this term, Arise and come, expecteth the whole business of conversion from sin unto God: and this agrees with the learned Beza's potion upon the Text, Tota salution nostre inventure ratio continetur in his duobus. This the Lord eminently expects from people when the vaice of the Turele is heard in their Land, when the impediments of their conversion are removed, and the necessary means in order to them are indulged, as

I shewed you before.

2. Secondly, Come unto a further vigour and perfection in grace. None can say he hath attained, some may say, they are gone backward, and they are fallen, and have lost their first Love a to these the Lord saith, Arise and come away. I have given you all the means of grace, all the encouragements of holiness a I have removed your hinderances; now therefore go on to perfection; If you be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, set your affections upon things which are above. Christ expectath growth in grace proportioned to the means of grace, as in his gracious acceptance he alloweth for our temptations, in our hours of temptations: so

2: Qq.

he will be severe in the expediations of our Duty when we have no temptations to hinder it. You that see Landlords do the fame with your Tenants, as you are willing to forbear them, and to remit fomething when you know their times have been bad : fo von firicily expect your. Rent, when you know they have no cause to complain of any hinderances.

2. Thirdly, Come away to the Affemblies of Gods people. That God who in a time of perfecution will accept of two or stree gathered segether in his Name, will expect that you should when you may go with the multirude of them who keep Holiday. A particular Church is by this diffinguished from another, that the members of it meet of sa durd, in the fame place; and this God expecteth of his people if it may be. He expects that they should all be members of some particular Church, elfe they cannot live in the enjoyments of all his Ordinances: and he expects that they Thould meet in the same place with their fellow-members, I mean ordinarily fo meet. The Kite may featter the Chickens, but affoon as they can they will be together again. Christ you know compareth his people to Chickens; Every particular Church is a brood of these Chickens: Persecution may scatter them that they may be two or three here, and two or three there, but when it is gone, they must wife and come away to their wented joint Communion. I proceed to the third Question.

How must shey came?

1. The Answer to this is very case from what I have already faid. 1. They come to the Affemblies for Worffrip with the feet of their bodies: This is opposed to what the Apostle calls Heb. 10.

35. forfaking of our affemblies of our felves together.

2. Our coming to Christ in Conversion, must be by repentance and faith. You know Faith in Scripture is often exprest as by the action of the Eye looking up to bim, and by the action of the Mouth eating bes flesh and drinking bis blond, John 6. And by the action of the hand, Receiving bim, John 1. 12, Laying bold on bim, De: So by the action of the feet; Come unto me all you that are weary and beavy-laden; you will not some unso me that you might have life; whofoever cometh unto me. I will in no wife-cast a-

3. Our coming unto a further Vigour and perfection in Grace, fignifies the same thing which the Apostle calls a pressing on to that which is before, a going on to perfection, growing in grace, and importeth

porteth the endeavour of the whole Soul after a perfection in Da ey. By this time you have the fense of the Proposition, which you may take thus.

When the Lord in his Providence removes all impediments and difcontagements from his people, and giveth them all encouragements to their Duty, he doth then more particularly require of them their performance of it: whether it be 1. Their waiting upon bim in bis Ordidances; or, 2. Their coming by faith or repentance, their converfion unto bine ; or. 2. Their improving in the way of Grace and Halinels.

Only one thing as to the Explication remains. Why are the words doubled, verfe so. 14.

1. The words are doubled for the confirmation of the vising , Est confirmation. That we may be affured this is the Will of God concerning us. Practice. Thus Tofepo interpreted the doubling of Pharab's dream, Gen. #1. 22. And for that the dream was doubled to Pharash twice. it is because the thing is established by God, and be will shortly bring it to pafe. Give me leave to apply it here. This Precept is donbled to establish us that this is the will of God, which he commented requires of us the performance of; to let us know. That it is there which God will infift upon with us, and take a frict account of our obedience unto.

2. Secondly, The words are doubled for Further commende Beratio amof fairh Bernard.) It letteth us fee how Christs bowels vers towards poor creatures; he will not fuffer them to lie fill in their spiritual death, nor in their spiritual fleep; he eatls, and calls again to them to come unto him; it is because he hath a delight in the Sons of men.

3. By the doubling of the words in the third place, he fecretly Notat defidithe greatest encouragements and advantages to the contrary to neglect our duty, and with the fluggard to bry yes a listle fleet. yet a little flumber, yet a little folding of our hands to fleep. The Lord calls Samuel once, and a freend sine; and by El's counfel he goeth and lieth down again; the Dord eath a shird sime, we are afleep in a flate of fin, and the finner is foth to fir out of this fleep. The child of God is often affeep in fecurity, and her loth to file from that flate. The Lord doubleth his coll, and theseby mindeth us of our floth and unwillingness to our spicious Day.

But this is enough to have spoken for Explication.

I shall not need infill long upon the Confirmation, either proving That this is the Will of God, or shewing you the reasonable,

mefs of it.

1. What less than this is fignified to us by the Parable of the Vineyard, Effy 5. what mean those expressions of planting the Vineyard in a fruitful hill fencing it, gathering the stones out of it, planting it with the choicest Vines, building a Tower in the midit of it, making a Wine-press therein ; but the removing all impediments of their Duty, and the giving them all due encouragements to perform it. Now what follows? ver, 4. He looked that they should bring forth grapes: what was that, but what the Text calleth Arifing and coming away? To the fame purpose is the Parable Luke 20. 9. what other thing than this is fignified by the Parable of the Marriage-feaff, Matth. 22. 4. I have prepared my Dinner my oxen, my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready, come you to the marriage. The Parable of the Talents Matth. 25. Speaketh the fame thing also in effect. In short, he who considereth in Scripture, either the Precepts to this purpole, or the threatnings apaint those that have not improved their spiritual mercies, will find this abundantly justified.

2. Again secondly, Which of us doth not expell the like, where we have done the like? Who planteth a Vineyard (sith the Apossle) and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or, who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock, I Cor. 9.7. What end can we imagine that God should have, in removing our impediments, and in giving us all means of encouragements, but our due and better performance of our duties? This is a notion of truth that shineth in its own light, and approve this felf even to natural reason; besides the abundant evidence to it of the Will of God from Scripture, and indeed my work lies more in the Application than in the Confirmation of it. To that I therefore come. You see I have opened the Text and Doctrine in three things; I will also in three things dispatch the Application. I shall I. Speak a word to all. 2. A

word to the unregenerate. 3. A word to the Regenerate.

To all I fay, (yet not I, but the Lord;) Arife, come away to the publick Assemblies of Gods people. I told you the last day that it is spring time with us, The voice of the Turtle is heard in our Land, the singing of the Birds is come, God hath thought his people worthy of a few days of Liberty more. We hear again that pleasant voice.

1. Us

Esay 2. 3. Come you, and let m go up to the mountain of the Lard, to the bouse of the God of Jacob, and he will teach me of his ways, and me will walk in his paths. The time hath been you know when our Churches were scattered, our Communion broken, our Prayers I hope met together in heaven, but scarce two or three could meet together on earth: But that Winter is pass, that Rain is over and gone, O nom arise and come away! Come, as the particular Churches of Christ ought to come, we to durd, into the

fame place to worship God; I hear some say,

But is not this Separation ? (hall we not then feparate from the true Obi. Church of Christ? What is Separation? Is it separation for those who for many years have been united in one body, to worship God in all Ordinances together in one place, and only forcibly interrupted a few years, that they could not so meet, this force being removed to unite and meet together again? Is this Separation, or Union, I wonder? whom do we separate from? from any with whom we ever to were united? Do not we own the same Doctrine that our brethren profess to own? are not we agreed in the same acts. of Worthip? shall we not be kept united in the same bands of Love? Because we differ a little in some modes of Worship; is this a Separation? Are we not ready to join in every particular, where our Consciences tell us we may join with our Brethren, and not fin against the Lord? Do we call upon you not to come in the Assemblies of our Brethren, who meet not in the same place with us to worthip God? Nay, do not we press you to maintain communion with all Christians in the World in what your Consciences shall judg you may, and not rebuke you for sinning against God? What do we hear then of the empty noise of Soparation? will the Lord think you ever lay it to your charge, that you did not hold communion with others in acts where your consciences upon the best enquiry told you, that without sin you could not do it? Or do you think you may go a middle way, that is, not communicate in fuch acts, but not communicate with any other Assembly where you may do it with more Satisfaction? May you then all your life-time live without the Ordinances, which Christ hath purchased for you at the price of his bloud? May you live and do that never which he hath commanded you to do often? Can all the Churches of Christ meet in the same place? or do they separate because they meet in distinct places? surely none ever spake so weakly. Where's the Separation till first an Union

Union be proved? That you were once members of some other Church and bave left it without fufficient grounds. Brethren, I would have you affraid of Separation, but I would not have you affraid of the noise of it, where there is no pretence to it; Can any be fo weak as to think his living in a Parish makes him a member of the Church there? Are the Turks, Jews, Papifts fo who live within the same Precincts? What is it then ? If indeed any bave ealled a Minister, or afterwards submitted to bim as bis Pastor, and joyned with him (ordinarily) in all Ordinances, fo long as this Minister behaves bimfelf as the Minister of Christ preaching the truths of God. administring Ordinances and all Ordinances according to the rule of the Word: and living as an example to the flock of Christ, be that bath been formerly fo joined with him cannot without fin, whiles fuch Minister continues, (as before) withdraw communion from bim without confent. Nay more, if be fails in bis duty and there be any remedy to remove, or amend him in an ordinary regular course, be cannot without a finful feparation withdraw. More than this I can neither find in Gods Word, nor in any pretence of right reasons Now what this concerns you, who never fo chofe, nor fo fubmitted, nor were ever so united, &c. judg you, I must profess I cannot understand. Certainly I can never separate from those I never was united to, nor ever had any Obligation upon me to be so united. Suppose I were united, yet if I cannot without fin to my Soul keep that Union, my Separation is not finful. I cannot fin in uniting and being feparated too. They feparate from their Brethren who will not fuffer them to be one with them, but upon finful terms. Union with Brethren (though very precious) yet is bought too dear when it is bought with a dif-union from God. 1. Condemn not those with whom in all things you cannot unite, (you are no more infallible than they:) 2. Wherein you have attained, walk by the same rule : Go as far as you can with all Christians in the world. 3. And then walk in the light of your own consciences without fear of a guilt of Separation. I would not have you affraid of Noifes (which you know are most from empty Veffels,) though I would have you affraid of every fin; and fo much for this Objection, till I understand more the fenfe of it than I yet do. God hath indulged you a great mercy : and you may believe that he expects from you both an acceptance, and an improvement ofit; you may come to the Assemblies, therefore Arife, and come ewey. This is one thing I had to fay by way of Exborhortation, but it is the least, and as a mean in order to the other two. This is my word to All; Arise and come away to the Assim-

blies for worthip.

Secondly, To the unregenerate give me leave to fay, Arife and Ufe. 2. come. Arife from your grave of fin, from your Spiritual death, and come to Christ that be may give you spiritual life. Now (faith the Apostle) God calleth all men to repent. I should I fear be too charitable, if I should judge that in this Congregation here were no unregenerate persons; I am not of their minds who think all the regeneration God requireth of them that will come into the Kingdom of God, is a being facramentally born again of Water, I believe Christ intended more when he faid Except Iwash thee thou eanst bave no part in me. And, If a man be not born again of Water and the Spirit be can never enter into the Kingdom of God. Now my Beloved to you I fay, The Lord speaketh this day, Arife and come away, Acts 17.30. The days of Ignorance God winked at, but now he calls all men to Repent. Now, now that you live no longer in darkness and in the shadows of death. Now that you are no longer Pagans, but the light of the Gospel hath shined upon you. Now that you are no longer Papilts: They indeed made it a great piece of their Art to hide the light, which God lighted up under a bushel. NOW, that you need not go from City to City to feek one to speak to you in the name of the Lord. NOW God calls you to Repent, to Arife and come away. Let me,

1. Reflect the words of the Lepers upon you, 2 Kings 7.3. Why fit you bere until you die? Sirs, you are dying creatures, you are nearer the grave this day than you were yesterday, yea, if you take not heed you are eternally dying creatures: As the Lord liveth, there is but an hairs-breadth, but an inch of time (how short measure I cannot tell;) between you and your perishing for ever: If you sit here you shall die, if a man be not born again, he can never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Turn you, turn

you, why should you die O you finful Souls!

2. Confider, Now the voice of the Turtle is beard in our Land. I told you the Turtle is avis migratoria or latens at leaft, one of those birds that either in some time of the year travelleth into another Countrey, or lieth hid in our own. How long God will trust you with his Gospel I cannot tell: you know the Servants of God have had great thoughts of heart about this; they have observed, that ever since the Gospel was preached it hath been

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going

going its rounds, it hath had its time in Africa and Africa, and is no more heard there; It hath had its long time in Europe, it hath be in a long time judged to be paffing towards America.—They have the Guspel-time as well as we. When the Tuttle passeth, the ordinary means of your Salvation passeth: however, I am sure you are aver migratoria, when the Gospel shall pass I cannot tell you; I am sure it will not be long before you will pass. It may be the Winter is upon some of your faces, gray hairs here and there, yet the voice of the Turtle is heard, O Arise and come away!

3. Consider, Your Arising is for your self, your coming away is for your own good. If you resolve to go to hell, God will have his glory on you; what profit shall he have if you convert and be saved? what loss if you go on in your sins and be damned? You that in worldly concerns understand your interest, and will not neglect; Oh that at least in this your day you would know the things, the things that belong to your peace, before they be hid from your ejest. You have a day, and but a day, and yet a day after all your resistances, yet Christ says to you Arise and come, O to day, while it is called to day, harden not your hearts, left the Lord sine in his wrath, you shall never enter into his Rest. But possibly you will say, Can we then arise undcome! But to this God

willing I thell speak in my next Exercise. Or .land & rabou gu

In the last place, I fpeak unto you that are the ebildren of God: my words are the fame, they are Christs words to his Spoule. Arise and come away ; Arife from your fperitual fleep; Arife from your more imperfed exercifes of grace, and come a way to a further degree in bolinefs. I minded you in my last Exercise of the merey. of God to me; bur Wimer is past, our Rainy-member is over and gone 5 how foon the Clouds may again return after Rain , how foon the Winter may again return upon us I cannot tell you. (You know that all our years in the World are made up of Winters, as well as Summers;) but at prefent the Winter is gone, the Rainyweather is past. I have now told you, that God hath an expectation upon you that you thould Arife and come away, not only come to the publick Affemblies which God hath now opened even to those of you that are most scrupulous of your religious Communion. Not come unto Christ; (I speak to those of whom I prefere that you are arisen from the death of fin, and are come to Christ by a true repentance, and a true believing ; but though you be thus come, yet your motion is not finished, walls disturnied oris Thich

3. Use

Bernard) nbi officii & operis urgentior cegis necessitas, we have no time to sit still in our way to Heaven, no leisure to be idle; your motion is towards Heaven; Oh make now some progress!

1. It is not enough (in the first place) to tell you, that at [n b a time as this God looketh for it at your hands. Gods expectations for duty rise upon us, as his mercies are encreased toward us, To whom much is given, of him much shall be required. Brethren, God hath she wed you a great deal of mercy: Oh that you would think that he now expecteth from you a great deal of duty! God hath heard your prayers; for this Liberty you prayed, and God heard you; will you not say with Hannah, This liberty shall be improved for God? I tell you the Lord expecteth it at your hands.

2. And doth not the very nature of his mercy effecially call to you for it? God hath not fill'd your Barns with plenty, your Preffes do not burst out with new Wine; you have yet something of the bread of Affliction to eat, and of the water of Affliction to drink. Trading is dead: Oh! but your Pastors are not removed into corners. This is a spiritual mercy, though mercies of another nature would have obliged, yet a mercy of this nature doth much more, because it hath an immediate aspect upon your Souls, an immediate tendency to your improvement in holiness. To sum up all in a word then:

Is there any of you who in this time that the publick Watch hath been much flighted; your Paftors have not had those opportunities to watch over their flocks, have also flumbred and steps; and neglected that private watch which you should more exactly have kept over your thoughts, passions, corrupt Aff ctions? have you laid your self down upon your beds of Security, and taken your ease too much as to the exercises of Mortification? Now the Lord calleth to you to Arise from this bed of Security and Negligence, to re-inforce your Watch, and thus to come unto him in nearer and stricter degrees of holiness, to walk closer with Godthan of late you have done. Oh that you would hear your Beloved speaking to you by his Providences this day; Arise, and come!

Again, Is there any of you who have been too fore mith the world whiles you have wanted that former publick Communion, with God which you have enjoyed, and which usually to for influence the Gods children as to take them off too eager worldly purfuits? hath the World taken up too many of those thoughts and words which should have been spent upon better concerns. Hath

it taken up too much of your affections, too much of your time? Have you been thus asseep while it hath been a-night with you? O now Arise and come? It is time to awake out of your sleep of security, out of your sleep of carnality. The Winter is past, the Summer is come, the voice of the Turtle is heard. The Flowers appear on the Earth. The Summer is a time of motions, a time of action, vigorous action, O Arise, and come away! But in vain shall I speak to your ears if God pleaseth not to speak unto your hearts. Christ here first spake to his Sponse, before the thought of arising or coming away; and so he must do, or we shall never do the like.

But of this more (God willing) in my next exercise. In the

mean time let us pray, &cc.

Cant. 2. 10, 11, 12, 13.

My Beloved spake and said unto me; Arise my Love, my fair one, and come away, &cc.

Y last exercise was spent in an interpretation of the Bridegrooms words, Arife, and come away, and an enforcement of his Exhortation. I shewed you, that he would have all members of his Church, that in an hour of perfecution, had lurkt and lay hid in the Chambers of his providence and met only to worthip him as they could get opportunity, and the violence of men would permit, after liberty reftored, to come to the open and publick affemblies of his people. He would have all those within the compass of the visible Church, not brought home to Christ, to arise from their death of sin that they might live the life of Graces he would have those converted, and brought home unto him, to arise from their bed of carnality to a more Spiritual holy and heavenly conversation. To this purpose be spake unto ber, My Beloved (faith the Spouse) spake and faid unto me. The last Proposition of Doctrine I have to speak to from these words, is this.

That supposing all impediments removed, and all external incouragements present, yet the Spouse of Christ, must bear her Beloved speaking to her, before she will arise and come away.

You cafily fee whither this Subject will lead me, viz. To di-

feourse what influence of Grace is necessary to the several Spiritual motions, which God requireth of his people; and you will see from my interpretation of the terms, Arise, come away, That I have a very proper advantage to speak to them all: Nor is it an unseasonable doctrine for these times; wherein on the one side through ignorance, some make special grace necessary for every thing: Others would have it necessary for nothing. You will remember in my last exercise, that I Interpreted those words, Arise, and come away.

1. Arife, from the privacy of your corners, and come to my or-

dinances in your joynt-assemblies.

2. Arife from your death of fin, and by Faith and Repentance come to Christ.

3. Arife from your Spiritual deadness, Security, imperfections, and

come to a further progress in boliness.

As to all these the Beloved speaks before the Spouse comes. But I have had occasion heretofore to shew you; that Christ speaks more ways than one. He speaketh by his providence, 'Micab 6.

9. The voice of the Lord cryeth to the City, he speaketh in his word, he speaketh in the preaching of the Gospel, he speaketh by his Spirit. The Question is, what influence of Christ is necessary unto our good motions. This we cannot speak to without distinguishing.

1. concerning good actions. 2. concerning the agents in the do-

ing of them. As to the first,

1. Good actions or motions, are either such materially onely, or materially and formally too. Any actions are materially good, the matter of which is commanded in the word of God; whether it be performed in such a manner, from such a principle, and to such an end, as God requireth yea or no: Thus it is a good thing to go to Church and hear Gods word, a good thing to pray, to give alms. But formally, bonum est a causis integris: A thing is not formally good, if it be not done from such a principle to such an end, and in such a manner as God requireth.

Secondly, Good actions are either internal or external. Actions externally good are the acts of our outward man, whether the heart be in them or no; thus going to Church and hearing the Word are actions externally good, that is, acts of the outward man, which God hath commanded in his Word. But then there are actions of the inward man, such as believing, loving God, delighting in him.

him, these are actions of the inward man; good actions because God hath commanded them, and internal, because properly the actions of the inward man, and such which a man might perform if he had never a member of his body at liberty. There are also good actions, partly external, partly internal, that is, such where the concurrence both of the outward and inward man is necessary to make the action truly and compleatly good. As now vocal prayer, bearing the word, &c.

Secondly, We must distinguish concerning persons; for though all persons have the same natural inability, yet the case is widely different betwixt justified and unjustified Souls, betwixt such as have and such as have no interest in him. These things being premised, I shall indeavour to lay down the truth in these three con-

clusions.

1. A Christian by vertue of common grace denied to none and more fully granted to those who fit under the means of grace, may do many external actions; yea and some inward actions that are materially good. I told you before that by actions materially good, I understand fuch actions as were commanded in the word of God, and by it made the duty of all men : Now I fay, many of these may be done by Common-grace denied to none, and are freely in the power of mans will. Thus who doubts but men have power to go to Church, or flay at home to read a Chapter, or not read it, to keep from an Alchouse, or to go to it, to Swear, Lye, Cheat, or not to do these things, to do work, find pleasure on the Sabbathday, or not to do these things, with a thousand of such things more. Who knoweth not that Herod beard John Baptift gladly, Mar. 6.20. That thousands hear the Gospel, who yet have rasted nothing of special distinguishing grace; yea and by how much the means of grace are more granted to any by so much they are the more advantaged to these things, as they are daily urged and pressed to thefe things, and taught how to perform them : hence men by vertue of this Common-grace of God, which is denied to none upon whom the Gospel shines, may Read, Hear, Pray, get some knowledg of God, think of their fins, have fome fense of them, and trouble for them, and avoid many external acts of fin. Thus far for a Soul to Arife and come, requires no further speaking of Christ than by his word, by his providence, by the Preaching of the Gospel, upon which, if man will but put forth that native power which God hath given him, all thefe things may be done. What

is more required to them, than the use of our locomotive faculty, our abilities to Read, Hear, Meditate, of which experience telleth us, that even the lapfed Souls of men are not devested in other things, and as not in other things so not in these supposing the objects prefent, (which the Providence of God, and Commongrace doth afford men.) In this we are agreed with the greatest Patrons of free will. Indeed this must be understod in ordinary cafes, for supposing a violent temptation to some of these sinful actions, or to the neglect of these duties, what power he hath left in his Will till regenerated, to relift fuch a shock is another question; nay in such a case, Souls possessed of special and distinguishing Grace are not always able to fland, but being left by God, do often

fall and bow down to the tempter.

2. For internal Spiritual actions, and indeed all actions formally good. It is not enough, that Christ thould speak to bis Sponfe for the doing of them, in bis word or by the preaching of it; nor can any Soul perform them unless be speaks to it by the powerful voice of his Spirit unto ber beart. Here now we have a great many adversaries, the old Pelagians, the later Arminians, the Papilts, &c. The Pelagians of old maintained, that a man by the meer power of nature might fulfil all the commandments of God, and that there was no need of the Grace of God, or affistance of his Spirit. Arminians give a little more to grace than this comes to, but yet they deny that any Episcop. Difp. immediate action of the Spirit of God upon our Wills is necessary in 46.Cor.1. order to believing, when the word is before bim. They tell us that the will of man is of its own nature, free both to good and evil, and that they cannot believe, there is any fuch impotency to good upon him. They tell us that unregenerate men, are fuch as are not called by the word, or fuch as are called by the word : The first only collat. Haz. are dead in Sins. They tell us many bave a power to come to Christ, 239. who yet actually do not come. The Papifts are not all of one mind in the case. Aquinas tells us that a man in bis natural state counst Aq. 122. q. love God above all things, from any power of nature; and again, that 189, art. 3. none can prepare or dispose bimself to receive divine. grace, but Bonaventure, Scotus and others speak more boldly. The Articles of the Church of England (to which we adhere) fay thus: That such Art. 10. . is the condition of man fince the fall of Adam, that of his own power, and by his own works, men cannot convert, and prepare themselves for faith. That without the preventing grace of God which is through Christ, making us willing; and the cooperating grace of God, when we

are made willing we have no power to do any works of piety, grateful & acceptable unto God. Certainly then brethren let the men of this generation talk what they please; they are a spurious off-spring, no genuine Sons of the Church of England, that tell you of a power in man to believe and love God, if he will. Mans will is free, we confess, it is not forced to its action; but yet grace is powerful or none would be faved, no man would will that which is truly good, fi non fit laberum arbitrium quomodo Deus judicat mundum ? fi non fit gratia, quomodo falvat mundum? faith Augustine; we act freely in willing good, but it is his power that makes us to will. But because this is a question of the times, and those who understand little of this point, yet will avow themselves Patrons for this freewill and natural power in man: Let us a little enlarge upon this Point ; shewing you, 1. Where the question lies, 2. Upon what arguments we defend this impotency in man to that which is truly and Spiritually good.

1. Two things only I defire you to remember: 1. That the question is not De arbitrio liberato, of the Will renewed and fanctified in a justified and regenerate Soul, but de Arbitrio nondum libe-

rato; of the Will, before it is renewed and fan dified.

2. That the question is, concerning actions inwardly and formally good, such as now repenting, believing, loving God; and this is that which we defend, That although by vertue of the common grace of God denied to no man, a meer natural man that will but use the natural power and faculties which God hath given him, may avoid many sins of outward act, and do many things which God hath commonded him: as read, hear, pray, &c. And as to these things it be enough, that Christ speaks to men in the Word written and preached, they may upon the reading and hearing of that Arise and come; yet unless he further speaks to Scals by his Spirit working in them powerfully and effectually, they never will, or can come unto him by true Repentance, Faith, or any truly spiritual motion. This we prove,

1. From that violent inclination to evil which the Scripture speaks all natural men to lie under, and which every one finds in himself. Hark what the Scripture saith, Job 15. 16. Man drinks in iniquity like water, he rejoyceth to do evil. Pro. 2. 14. All the imaginations of mens hearts are evil & only evil, and that continually, Gen. 6.5. We are the servants of sin, Rom. 6. 17. There's none that understandeth, none that seeketh after God, Rom. 3. 11. Our conversation is in the light of our stelle, Ephes. 2. 2. The motions to sin work in

I. Arg.

our members to bring forth fruit unto death, Rom. 7.5. We bave not the love of God in us. John 5. 42. We cannot know the things of God. 1 Cor. 2. 14. nor be subject to the Law of God, Rom. 8. 7. Affoon may a man with his hand ftop the violent motion of the Sea, as give check by his own power to the strong torrent of his

lufts. But observe,

2. Secondly. How the Scripture represents the flate of a na. tural man, 1. It is a ftate of fpiritual death, Ephel. 2. 1. You bath be quickened who were dead in trespasses and fins. What motion of Matth. 8. 22. natural life can a dead man perform? nor can any Soul spiritually dead perform any action of spiritual life. 2. It is a frate of blindnels; You were darkness, Epbef. 5. 8. Christ came to preach reenvering of fight to the blind, Luke 4.18. Hath the blind man think you a power to fee? How shall he that is spiritually blind, rill Christ open his eyes, look unto bim that was lifted up as the brazen Serpent was lifted up in the wilderness? 3. It is a ftate of Servitude and Slavery, a natural man is a Captive, Luke 4. 18. he is in the first of the Devil, and beld captive by bim, 2 Tim. 2. 26. Doth a bodily captivity deprive us of all power of bodily motion beyond the will of him whose captives we are, and is the spiritual Captive more free? 4. It is an babituated state of fin : We use to fay. Custom is a second-nature. A confirmed habit doth not indeed devest us wholly of our natural power, but it makes it upon the point useless to us. Heark what God saith in our case, Fer. 12. 23. Can the Ethiopian change bis skin, or the Leopard bis spots, then may you do also good that are accustomed to do evil?

3. Thirdly, Let us confider how the Scripture expresseth the state of a Soul Spiritually alive, from whence all actions and motions proper to a spiritual Life, must in reason flow. feth it as a flate of Regeneration, John 3. 3. Except a man be born again of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, John 1. 12. which were born not of flesh, nor of blond, nor of the will of man but of God : Is this think we in the power of man to be born again? Can a man enter into bis mothers womb and 'e born again, faith Nicodemus? if he could, yet there's another thing, he must be born again of the Spirit, and that Spirit bloweth where it liftetb. This being born again is the fame with having a new beart and a new fpirit, baving the heart of stone taken away, and the heart of flesh given, Ezech. 36.26. It is a renovation in the inward man; It is not the getting a new substance of the Soul, but a new-will

new affections, a new understanding; old things must pass away, all things mult become new. It is a new Creation, created to good works. faith the Apostle, Epbef. 2. 10. The Image of God is created in righteon nefs and bolinefs, Ephel. 4. 24. Poor worm! Art thou not able to create a flie, or a gnat; and art thou able to create the glorious Image of God in the Soul? Hast thou not a power by all thy thinking to add one cubit to thy ftature, nor to make fo much as one hair of thy head white or black? and hast thou indeed a power to add rightcousness to thy will, and to make thy whole black Soul white? Canst thou not change thy skin? and canst thou indeed change thy heart? canst thou not command an impetuous passion, and canft thou put off all thy, vile affections? Again, The flate of grace is fet out as a state life from the dead. Thou therefore that thinkest thou hast' a power to believe, to love God; first go and try what thy power can do, to make a dead body live, call for the Soul paffed away to return again into the dry bones and putrified carcals? affoon shalt thou prevail, as in commanding the loft Image of God to return into thy putrefied Soul: Oh, how

vain men are in their imaginations !

4. Add to this, If poor dead Souls had a power in their own wills to move and to come to Christ; what mean all those Scriptures which tell us, That it is given to us on the behalf of Christ to believe Phil. 1. 29. That we are faved through faith, and that not of our felves. it is the gift of God, Ephel. 2. 8. that no man cometh to the Son, but be whom the Father draweth, John 6. 44. How can you believe who receive bonour one of another. John 5. 44. God gives to will and to do of bis own good pleasure, Phil. 2. 13. and abundance of other Scriptures. The first spring of spiritual Motion, is the sanctified and renewed-Will. Now God giveth to will, faith the Apostle, what bast thou that thou hast not received ? 1 Cor.4.7. By the grace of God I am that I am, I Cor. 15. 10. They shall be willing in the day of my power, Pfalm 110. 4. Now what kind of power this is, is another question betwixt the Arminians and us, viz. whether it be refistible by us or no? but I am not concerned in it in this place. It certainly is more than a moral Suafion. It is fuch a power as he ufeth in Creation, for we are created to good works: and the Image of God is created in us (faith the Apostle,) such a power as he ufeth in raifing the dead; for he faith, Amake thou that fleepeft and stand up from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. Ephel. 5. 14.

5. Every change (in the fifth place) is a fortiori, it is made by fomething that is stronger. But take every man in the state of Nature, and fin and last is the strongest in him. I shewed you that by nature we have violent strong inclinations to that which is cvil. I would fain know how these strong inclinations should be abated, or weakned, or mortified but by a stronger power, which is not to be found in man : The ftrong man keepeth the boufe until Rom. 7. 5. a stronger than be cometh; and the will of man not being nuda, naked and indifferent : how can he being naturally bent to evil, be unbent, but by the mighty arm of the Almighty God?

6. Sixthly, Mans will naturally moveth according to the dictate of bis understanding; he cannot love, defire, nor delight in any thing but what he feeth goodness and excellency in, he cannot hate, and abhor that which he feeth no evil in. A man by Nature can neither fee any good or excellency in God or Christ to chuse him, or delight in him, nor any evil in fin to abhor it. He is darkness, Ephel. 5. 8. he cannot love God whom he hath not feen ; be cannot receive the things of the Spirit, they are foolighness

to bim, I Cor. 2. 14. he cannot know them.

7. Laftly, To thut up this Discourse, I appeal unto the Souls of all those before me who know any thing of God, or have tasted any thing of his Grace; have you found it so easie to close with Christ? nay, examine your selves, do you think you have it in your power by a firm and fleady affent fo much as to agree to the truths of the Gospel? I know you do not do it. The Object is spirmual, we are carnal, and cannot discern it till God opens our eyes. The Object to be embraced is spiritual, we are carnal and fold under sin, and cannot embrace it until power be given us from above. Nor doth this grace constantly-attend the preaching of the Gospel, that is but a found to the Ear; the heart must be touched by the Finger of Gods Spirit, or it will never melt, never open, never receive Jesus Christ, (whether supposing a man doth what in him lies, God will not give this special distinguishing grace, is another question.) To make God a Debtor to a creature is very uncouth; who hath given first to him? It is enough to say it is an idle question, and that a Soul cannot be produced who ever did what in him lay in the use of means, to whom Gcd was at last wanting; but still I say Christ must otherwise speak than barely in his word written or preach'd to a Soul dead in trefpasses and fins before it will, before it can arise and come to Christ: Thus much for the fecond Conclusion. Laftly.

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Laffly, For those Souls who are regenerated, Christ must also freak to them by his Spirit before they will or can arise from their state of Jecurity and carnality, or from their more imperfect flate to a more perfect ftate, and more perfect actings of Holinefs. He hath indeed given to them to will, but he must also give unto them to do. It was to Christs Disciples that he said, Without me you can do nothing, John 15.5. Paul faith no more; than I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me. It is Augustine's Glos, Non dicit fine me parum poreftis facere, nec poteftis ardui aliquid fine me facere, vel difficulter fine me poteritis ; fed nibil fine me perficere potefin. He doth not fay, you can do little without me, nor you can do no difficult thing without me; nor you can hardly do any thing without me; but you can do nothing without me. Our will is not libera nift quantum liberata, faith Aug. No otherwise free than as the Son hath made it free; but it is not by the Son fomade free, as that it no longer wanteth oris fui awxilio, his fleaking to it. Bernard tells us that fome of his Monks found fault with him, that being renewed and fanctified, he still begged the affistance of God; he told them that Paul faith, not when God bath began bis good work you Mall finish it, but be who bath began a good . work, be shall finish it. The wounded man that fell amongst thieves. Luke 10. 35. was not left affoon as his wounds were bound up. but under a continual care. The unregenerate Soul moves not without preparing and exciting grace; he doth nothing spiritually without grace working mightily in him, giving him to will. The gracious Soul moveth not without co-operating grace, without a following and affifting grace. Indeed upon renovation, To will is present with them ; (this is the principle of spiritual life:) but they have no firength to perform: they confent to the Law of God Rom. 7. 22. They approve it, but still they have need of God to teach them bis Will, and to lead them into the land of Righteoulnels. Pfalm 143. 10. to frengiben, to ftablift them, and especially to raise them when they are bowed down; for this is the Lords work, Pfal. 146. 8. Let me conclude this with a Note of a learned Author, 2 Cor. 12. 9. When Paul had prayed for the removal of the thorn in his flesh, he received this answer, My grace shall be sufficient for thee, for my frength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore (faith this grave Author.) whofoever is be after bis renovation doth not acknowledg fuch weakness, for which he bath daily need of the grace of God, Gods frength may be began in bim, but it is not made perfect in bim, for it is never

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made perfect but in our meannefe. Thus much shall ferre to have opened to you, what speaking of Christ to his Spoule in her sexeral flates is necessary in order to his Spoules Arifing and coming away in the fenfes before explained. I come now to the Application, which will be fitted not fo ftrictly to the Proposition as to the body of my Discourse upon it, which (as you have heard) hath been concerning the power of man in his motions towards that which is good: and what influence of God upon him is necessa-

ry, in order to all fuch motions. Hence observe,

That there is none (especially living under the preaching of the Go- Ufe. 1. (pel) but may do more good than be doth, and avoid more fin than be doth avoid. There is a Common grace which God denieth unto Vitiofa concenone, aswell as a special effectual grace which he grants not to all. nat hominem ad When I name Good, I mean fuch things as are materially good malum, non decommanded in the Word of God. Thus to read and hear the terminat. Word, to pray, to do justly, to live soberly, to be charitable, are all good things, and fuch as men may do without special distinguishing grace. Yea, and as under the Gospel there is a greater grace dispensed, I mean common grace still, and further light shining forth: So men living under it may yet do more, they may get a further knowledg both of God, and Sin : they are more advantaged, being often called upon to fit alone to confider their ways. and to be humbled for their fin. I am not of their mind, who think that where the Gofpel is preached, it is attended with fuch a powerful influence of grace, that if men will but afe the power of their own wills they may repent, believe andbe faved; (I want one place of Scripture to prove that.) I am of their mind who think, that belides the preaching of the Gospel, a powerful influx upon the heart changing it is necessary; but unquestionably all men, and especially such as are under the preaching of the Gospel, have a power to do much more than they do, both in declining fin, and doing good. It is an excellent passage of Augustine, Firmissime Aug. de fide ad tene & nullatenus dubites poffe quidem bominem quem nec ignorantia Petrun. c.32. literarum nec aliqua probibet imbecillitas vel adversitas verba Legis & Evangelii five legere, five ex ore predicatoris audire : fed ut quad andit corpore corde etiam percipiat & velit & poffit, neminem poffe nifi quem gratia Dei prævenerit. Hold it, faith he for a firm truth and by no means doubt but that a man who can but read , (and that is a thing may be learned you know;) or that is not weak and fick may read the Word, or hear it preach'd but be cannot understand

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The Application of the Dodrine.

derstand and believe what he reads without the grace of God: And (by the way) give me leave to tell you, that the damnation offinners another day will lie here. As I believe that Heathens will perish, not because they believe not in that Christ of whom they have not heard, or lived not up to that law which they never received; but because they lived not up to the light and law of nature which they had; they shall be judged without the law, faith the Apostle, Rom. 2. So I do believe that the damnation of finners under the Gofpel will not lie here, that they did not do what was not in their power to do; but here, that they did not do what God commanded them, and gave them power to perform. They have a power to read, to come to the affemblies and hear the Word, to gain the knowledg of God and fin, to confider their ways, to speak truth, to keep their tongues from Curfing, Swearing, Lying, Reviling, to keep themselves from external profanation of the Lords day; and much more than this, to which Special distinguishing grace is not necessary. It is one great thing that the Patrons of free-will, have to object against the doctrine of special and diffinguishing grace; That if man hath not a power to believe and repent, then God shall condemn men for that which they had no power to do: It were possibly no difficult thing to vindicate Gods justice even in that. Our common Father was once invested with a power to do whatsoever was necessary, either for his or our Salvation; if he for us loft that power, furely, God was not bound to reflore it, and yet might expect of us what he at first gave to us: But I do not think we are put to so hard a shift. As the righteous God will find matter enough to condemn the Heathen for, without bringing this in judgment against them that they have disobeyed his written law, which they never heard of; fo for those who sit under the Gospel, there will be enough for God to condemn them for, which is in their power to perform; whether we say that they shall be condemned for not believing, and not repenting yea or no. If they did what is in their power, it were not enough to fave them; but not doing fo much they do justifie God in condemning them. Let any man do what in him lieth, if then the Lord doth not superadd his powerful and effectual grace, he hath fomething to fay; but if he doth not that, his mouth is stopped, his blood (while he perisheth) is upon his own head. Let this be the first Use.

From hence you may judg of the truth of their Doctrine, who

will make you believe that man hath in himself a power to that which is truly and Spiritually good. It is a novel Destroy and too too frequently published in these times, it supposets man fifthe same estate as Adam was, under no guilt of Original sin; for estainly if he be as the Scripture speaketh him, dead in fine, Christ must quicken him, Eph. 2. 1. if he be darkness as the Ephestals were, he cannot be light but in the Lord; if he be a Captive of Satah, the Son must make him free. If he be an Ethiopian he cannot of himself change his skin. In short, it is a Doctrine contrary to multitudes of Scriptures, to the Judgment of all ancient Divines, expressly contrary to the Doctrine of the Church of England; and to the experience of all Christians in the world. But then the Question is.

What God means when he faith to a finner Arife, and come a-

ens eternal death if he refuseth?

Ianswer, first, God minds the sinner of his Daty. Our Duty is not limited by the power we have, but to be measured by the power we once had; God hath not lost his right to call for his Debt, though we have lost our ability to pay it. By this Law is the knowledg of sin, and by it as by a School-master we are whipt unto Christ.

2. God calleth unto us to do what in us lieth in order to our relieving, and in order to our repenting; we cannot come to Christ except the father draweth by powerful and special Grace; but we may come to Church, and hear, we may come from the Alchouse and leave our lewd and gross conversation; these things must be done before we can believe: He calls to us to get a Knowledg of, and an acquaintance with the law of God, that you may know what sin is; to search and try, and to restect upon your ways; these things are means in order to his giving Repentance unto life.

3. Nor are the promises or threatnings in vain, especially supposing that God upon our due use of means, will not be wanting in the influences of his grace: the promises shall have their certain issue, in case the duty be done; and the threatnings shall not fall to the

ground, in case the duty be not performed.

Lastly, This lets you all see how much you live upon grace. No man cometh unto the Son unless the Father draws him; and when he is come, he must be drawn, or he will never run after him. The Spoule must hear her Beloved speak, or she will not arise and

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come

some away. The Disciples of Christ without him can do nothing. Saint Poulean de all things, but it is through him frengthenine. Eph. 4. 13. there's only this difference. The Soul as to the receiving of the first grace is meerly passive, and the Subject of opevating place. But the first grace being received; we are fellowworkers together with God, and are the Subjects of co-operating grace; fill grace is needful, quickening grace to excite us, who though not dead as before, yet are dull and heavy; frengthening grace to affift us, who are yet weak; co-operating grace working together with us, as to every thing that is good. I live (faith Paul, Gal. 2.) yet not I, but Chrift liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God. In the moment of Conversion, grace worketh upon us, but without us : In our converted flate, grace works in us and together with us ; branches in Christ bring forth fruit in bim, Joh. 15. 2. All your business is to be obedient to the Heavenly call and motion, not to queneb, not. to refift the holy Spirit, by which you are sealed. This lets us see what poor Creatures we are, and learns us bumility; what bave we, which we have not received? what do we in which we have not the great affiltance of the Almighty Power? This lets us fee what we are to write upon our most lively vigorous performances: Not unto us, O Lord, not to us, but to thy name be given the Glory. It also lets us see the daily need of Prayer, and of an boly. Conversation; our locks are shaven off where our great strength lay, and we become as other men, if once our God be departed from us.

To own Fad the

Luction was rich asmale melascal

Cant. 2-14, 15.

O my Dove, that art in the elefts of the Rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.

Take us the Foxes, the little Foxes that Spoil the Vines ; for our Vines

bave tender Grapes.

and and a light

Nother former verses, the Sponsespake; (though she did but repeat the words of her Beloved 1) here he speaks again himself, if we should say that she goes on in her repetition, it makes no difference at all as to the sense, though the repetition of those words, Arise, my Love, my fair one, and come away, would rather incline us to think that speech sinished. However, these are the Beloveds words whether repeated, or spoken de novo. In which are considerable:

1. The compellation, O my Dove ! that art in the clefts of the

Rock, in the secret places of the stairs.

2. The matter of his speech; which is hortatory in three things.

1. Let me bear thy voice. 2. Let me see thy countenance. 3. Take

us the Foxes, the little Foxes.

3. The arguments by which the Exhortations are prest, which are annexed to the several Branches of the Exhortation. Let me bear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice. Le me see thy commensure, for thy countenance is lovely. Take us the Foxes, the little Foxes, for they spoil the Vines, and our Vines have tender Grapes. Whatfoever is necessary for the explication of these words, you shall have under the several propositions of Doctrine, which I shall handle from them, which are these:

That the Spouse of Christ is, and ought to be as a Dove. Se- 1. Prop.

condly,

This Dove is and may be in the clefts of the Rock, in the fecret places 2. Prop. of the stairs. Thirdly,

That when she is so ber Beloved defireth to fee her countenance, and 3. Prop.

counteth it comely. Fourthly,

That when Christs Dove is in the clefts of the Rock, Christ expedieth 4. Prop. to bear ber voice and counts it sweet.

Of the first of these I shall say nothing, because I fully opened

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the resemblance of the Church and Spouse of Christ to a Dow, when I handled the 15 th. verse of the former Church, where our Lord had told his Spouse----she had Dowes eyes, I shall therefore begin with the Second.

The Spouse of Christ is, and may be, in the clefts of the Rock, in the feeres places of the stairs. Christ here speaketh to her as under those

circumstances.

This Proposition will call to us; 1. For explication, where all that we may have to enquire upon, is what is here meant by the elests of the Rock, the secret places of the stars? The Rock is considerable, 1. As a place of beighth, (so usually Rocks are:) or, 2. as a place of security, especially the holes of the Rock, 3. as a place of privacy and obscurity: surther I shall desire you to observe, that in the Hebrew it is VODT, in the singular number, and with a particle before it, which (though not always) yet often denoteth an Emphasis. Having only premised this, I shall in four particulars comprehend all I have met with from Interpreters, for the explication of this passage: As it either signifies, the Saints insirmity, or the Churches obscurity at some times, on the Spouses Heavenly-mind-

edness, or finally ber protection and fecurity.

1. This Phrase in the first place denotes to us the Spouses infirmity. Opening to you as the commendable qualities, fo the infirmities also of the Dove (in my diffcourse.) I instanced in fearfulness as one of them, this makes her feek the clefts of the Rocks, and the fecret places of the fteps, or flairs or ascents; where the not only taketh Sanctuary (sometimes) from the Hawk, and Birds of prey pursuing her, but also when her own timorous nature suggests danger to her, where indeed there is no real danger. It is a Bird very fubject to be frighted, and upon that fright the feeks the elefts of Rock, the fecret places of ascent to hide herself in, Ephraim (faith the Prophet Hof. 7. 11.) is a filly Dove without beart that goes down to Egypt. There was no reason for Ephraims fright, and going down to Egypt, in the fright but ber own infirmity; the was a filly Dove without heart. The Spouse of Christ, labours also under her infirmities : the Bride (faith Mr. Durham upon my Text.) is bere compared to a Dove biding berfelf out of unbelief and anxiety, taking berfelf to poor shifts for ease, &c. The Child of God is subject to her timorations; & as oft-times, through weakness, they fly to other refts; so though this cannot be said, yet oft-times we find them afraid to

come forth to Christ; to lay hold upon him to trust themselves upon his everlasting arm ; when no other reason can be given for this fearfalness, but only that they are like Ephraim, filly Doves without an beart. They are afraid of the Lamb of God, left like a Lion he should tear them in pieces. That they may be thus frighted is fo evident upon experience, that nothing need be fald upon it. The causes of this timeration are too many to be inlarged upon in a collateral discourse. The guilt of fin will ordinarily do it, you know it did it in David, all bis bones quaked, God in that case withdrawing himself even from men according to his own heart.

A meer desertion will do it, which possibly was Jobs case, for God gave him testimony that he was a perfect and apright man; nor do we read of any eminent guilt he had contracted. A melancholy temper will cause it, in conjunction with that knowledge which the Child of God hath, what he hath deferved, and how often he finneth against God; a temptation will do it; though that man who will question the love of God, because he is sollicited to fin. may as well queltion Christs acceptance with his Father; certain it is that in this fenfe, the Spoule may be in the elefts of the Rock, indeed a little thing will fright a gracious Soul thither: there is a love-jealousie, which those to whom Christ is most dear, are most fick of. They have so quick a sense of their own guilt. and what they have deserved at Gods hands; and so high a value for the Love and Favour of God; that a little thing frights them. and puts them into a fit of jealoufy concerning it. Now (faith the Apofile) we have an High-Prieft that can bave compaffin upon our infirmities. Christ here calls to his Dove in the clefts of the Rocks. in the fecret places of the flairs; but of that I shall have a further opportunity to speak; when I come to confider the precepts, Let me bear thy voice let me fee thy countenance.

Secondly. The Dove sometimes (in its own desence!) files to to the alefts of the Rocks, to the secret places of the stairs; by these expressions I yet understand nothing but places of secret, and observing. The Heb. Rabbies interpret the expression to signify danger, and apply it to Israel passing through the Red Sea, for they will allow no fold of sheep but their own, no Pigeon house for Gods. Doves, but in Judea: but our Lord hath told us, he hath other sheep, not of that fold, and by a parity of arguments, he hath out there pigeons than those of that house. Que columbe more latebrain petit et in severa agis, sigh Mercer. An Hank or a storm will drive

the Doves to the cliffs of the rock and to the secret places of the flairs: and thus the Expression denoteth the Churches observing, and such may be the state of the true Church of Christ. This throws me upon the Controversy betwixt the Papists and us, Wheeber Christs Church must always be visible, that is, conspicuous to the World? It is a question which now a days by the Romish Emissaries is got into every Coffee-bouse. Let me therefore speak a word or two to it.

1. The question is not, Whether Christ bath had a true Church at all simes? Some of their impudent Orators will tell you that we deny that, but let them produce one Protestant Author if they can, and their great Cardinal Bellarmine doth us the right to confess that we grant this; though we say this or that particular Church may sail, which they must confess too, or find us a true Church amongst the Turks, for we know there were seven true Churches there in Suint John's time.

2. Secondly, The question is not, whether Christ hath had a true visible Church in all times. We do believe that in all Ages Christ hath had and will have amongst men on earth a true Church

as well as an invisible Church in Heaven,

Bellarmine comes more roundly to his business, telling us that by the Church, he doth not understand this or that man, but a multitude, in which there are prelati & subditi, Prelates and People.

3. Thirdly, If by his Prelati he doth not mean Mitred Prelates and Bishops, but Officers and Governous of the Church; we hardly believe there ever was, or ever will be such a state of the World in which Christ in that sense hath not had, and shall not have even in that sense a true visible Church.

4. But the question is, Whether Christ bath always had, and shall have a certain visible Church in one place; or which can derive a certain succession of persons from the Apostles to the present Ru-

lers in it. This we deny.

Lastly, We deny, That Christ in all Ages hath had, and must have some particular Church that shall be splendide, as gloriose, splendid and glorious; and as a City set upon an Hill giving such a light that all may see, know and admire her. This external splendor we say, is not effectial to the true Church of Christ. An inward splendor is that lies in purity of Doctrine and Worship (which yet also may vary in degrees, but an external splendor

Bellarm. in qu. de Eccles.

confifting in the Peace, Triumph, flourishing condition of Pieletes and Governours, and multitude of Profesiors openly owning and appearing to own the Golpek is not. Here's the true hinge of the Controversies betwixt the Papilts and us : We fav. There is no Dove of Christs, but may be in the clefts of the rocks, in the fewer places of the flairs: Where was the external folendor of the lewish Church, in Elie's time when the Ark was taken, and the good Woman named her child Ichabod, The glory is departed from Ifrael? Where was it when the Ark fo long refled in the house of Aminadab? Nay, where was the outward splendor of the Church from Solomon's time, especially in Abab's time, when Elias complained that he was left alone, when Obadish hid the Prophets by fifties in Caves? Where was the Golpel-Church till Chrift was thirty years of age? After Christs time, where was the external fplendor of the Church for 300 years until Conftantine arole? yet all this while we believe, and it may be (were it worth the while we have fo much left us in writings;) we could flow them where all along these turbulent times, there were in several places numbers of Christians under Pastors, owning Christ and the same Doctrine of the Gospel in opposition to their abominable innovations that we do: All they can pretend to is that they can boaft of a Succeifion from Peter to the Chair of Rome; when it comes to be tried, it proves a beaftly one; many fuch persons as Christ never fent, nor Peter would never have owned (and if they had a Female-Pope or two which their own Writers affirm . forely the faccession failed there too:) however we know how case it is for them who have had both the liberty, and the impudence to put in and out into Writings of the Ancients what they pleafe, (as they know hath been fufficiently proved to them :) to make their own pedigree as they lift; and all the wonder is, that at those advantages they have made it no better than they have done to ferve their purpofes. They vainly glory in a fuccettion of persons, and pretend they can name them (how truly we know not, nor the truth of their Heralds in recording; we are forces to keeping of other Records, they have evidenced themselves falle enough.) We glory in a fuecession of Doctrine (which we are fure they cannot glory in .:) And we do believe that Christ hath always had, and shall always have a company of Christians lie the World, and under the inspection of Christs Officers, who have owned the true Faith which we profes, "though the flate of this people

people hath according to the unfearchable epunfels of God, and wife dispensations of his Providence been sometimes in a more splendid, glorious, perspicuous condition as a City upon an Hill, at other times in a more persecuted afflicted state, as a Dove in the elefts of the Rocks, in the feeret places of the states:

But this is enough for the second particular,

Thirdly, I told you this Expression may also denote the Sprituality and beavenly-mindedness of the Sponse. The phrase (faith the learned Mercer,) may be referred and decorem Sponle alta betens. The Lark, the Partridg, many other Birds, they love, they fit, they nestle on the ground. The Dove doth not fo, the makes her nells in the Rocks, in the Afeints. It is Christs precept to his Disciples, Matth. 6. Lay up for your selves Treasures in Heaven : vez and there every true Spouse of Christ lives, there she nestleth. Our conversation is in beaven (faith the Apostle) from whence me expell a Redeemer. They live in Christ: I in you (faith Christ.) and you in me. Your life (faith the Apostle) is bid with Christ in God. This comes to Bernards notion, In vulneribu Christi, in the clefts of the Rocks that is faith he, in the wounds of Christ. You know Christ is in Scripture compared to a Rock; he was prefigured by the Rock that furnished the Hraelites with drink in the Wildernels. That Rock was Chrift (faith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 10. 3.) This is advantaged by the two things I noted to you concerning the form of the word which is used in the Text which is in the fingular number, and hath a prefix which though not always yet very often denoteth an Emphasis, in the clefts of that Rock : Tis not every Rock that hath clefts fit for Christs Dove. There are Rocks that are never feen but at low-water, every Tide covers them. The Dove would be drowned if the were hid in these Rocks, but theis in the clefts, 2707 of that Rock; that Rock which was Christ; that is, a losty Rock, a Rock of Ages, a Rock above all rocks. Other Rocks are as Solomon faith, habitation for Conies; this alone is the habitation for these Doves, and she dwells in the elefts of this Rock. That I may put my hand (faith Thomas) into the holes of his fides, and lay my fingers in the Print of his nails: There's the cleft of the Rock where Christs Dove lives.

most all Interpresers touch upon. A Rock is a frong place, no undermining Rock, no easie coming at Cities built upon them to batter them; therefore Nature hath taught the Conies to make

their

their houses there, (there they cannot be digged out.) It is the work of the Omnipotent Arm to cut Rivers in Rocks, Job 28.10. He alone could cleave the Rocks in the Wilderness. Pfalm 78. 15. It is faid, that the man who malketh righteoufly thall dwell on high, Efay 33, 16, bis place of defence shall be the munition of Rocks. Every one of Christs Doves is in this sense in the clefts of the Rock, in the secret place of the Ascents: Pfalm 91. 1. He that dwelleth in the fecret place of the most High hall be under the hadow of the Almighty. They are under the special protection of God; they are under the fingular care of the great Rock) the Lord Jesus Christ. You know the Church hath a Promise, The gates of Hell shall not prevail against it: What is the reason? The is in the clefts of the Rock. The righteous man hath a Promise; His defence (faith Isaiab.) shall be the munition of Rocks. Pfalm 12.5. I will fet bim on high from bim that puffeth at bim. But this is enough to have noted to you both for the Explication of this Proposition, and also for the Confirmation which I have subjoined to the several branches of

the Explication. I come now to the Application.

In the first place fee here an answer to the Ramish Question , fo VG. 1. much at their congues ends in every company: Where was your Church before Luther? If they mean by it (which they must if they fpeak fenfe;) Where was the people owning the fame Faith you own? the was where Christs Dove sometimes useth to be. in the clefts of the Rocks, in the fecret place of the stairs; the was there whither the bloudy and ravenous Vultures of their Synagogue had driven her. Was the a Virgin stript of her Ornaments? it was because themselves had stript her to dress up the Whore that fits upon the feven Hills. She was where Gods feven thousand were when Elijah thought he had been left alone, yet she then was in the clefts of the Rock, owning the Lord Jefus Christ, and Faith in him, hoping in, believing in him, who died for our fins and rofe again for our Justification. Where was our Church? the was partly in Souls departed before the Altar, crying, for Vengeance against those Romith men of bloud that had haltened her thither: Partly in places where the Lord bad bidden ber, whiles their Rev. 12. 14. great red Dragon, (which deceived the whole world for a time, and times, and half a time, cast out of his mouth waters as a floud after ber. that be might cause ber to be carried away of the flood. It when they ask, where was your Church before Luther? they mean, where was the Doctrine of our Church? The answer is easie, It was

in the writings of the Prophets and Apollies. Learned men have fhewed them it was to be found in the writings of the Ancients, and we dare challenge them to fearch their own Archives. If we can but find a Bible there (not corrupted by them;) or the Nicene Creed or Apostles Creed amongst them; if we can but find there the Lords Prayer, (if their Ave-Mariaes have not swallowed up their Pater-nofters;) and the ten-Commandments, which we shall find ten in the Bible, though for fear their Image-worship should go down, their Catechisms have lost the second. their seven Sacraments we can but find those two Christ appointed Baptifm and the Lords Supper, which I think we shall though fo mustled with their late Superstitions as 'tis hard to know them; Nay, if they can but find us an old Service-book of their own, we shall find the Doctrine of our Religion, before Luther. If they mean, where will you find a Catholick visible Church under one visible head upon the Earth, or under Prelates and Abbots, &c. derived from that Head; we do not take our selves concerned to look for any fuch thing.

Secondly, What you have heard offers to every Soul an advantage to try whether he be one of Christs Doves, yea or no? In my last Exercise we distinguished such as had relation to Christ by their Dove-like and dispositions; but all that look like Doves are not so, they are not Christs Doves: Moral vertue counterfeits that Dove-like temper in many things, but by this shall the trial be persected. The Dove that dwells in the cless of the Rock, in the secret places of the Ascents, that is Christs Dove; it affords two characteristical notes of a child of God, of the Spouse of

Chrift :

1. She dwelleth on bigb, the is not of the Earth, earthly.

2. See nestles in the Rock Christ Jesus, in the clesis of the Rock.

I will begin with the fecond.

1. Christs Dove nestles only in him; He is their Rock, his wounds are their clefts of the Rock: and this, give me leave to tell you, hath been the Rock of all the Saints of former Ages. Heretofore it was a mark of the Doves that belong to the Romish Synagogue, to trust to, and rest in any thing but the righteousness of Christ for Salvation. We are now told that man hath nothing but his own inherent righteousness to trust to: but what Pigeon-house those Doves belong to that make this noise is not hard to conjecture;

Ufe. 2:

you may know they are Galileans, their speech agreeth thereto, yet not to the wifeft of them neither at least if that be true which is reported of their dying Cardinal that the should cry out, Tutiffimum eft, &c. It was fafest to trust to the merits of Christ, but leaving these new Divines to stand or fall to their own Master. By this you shall know you are the Doves of Christ, if you be in the elefts of this Rock; no Soul is fo, but he that is his beloveds, and his beloveds, his. There are a generation that have no nefts at all, I mean for their Souls. The Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nefts, but how many thousand Souls have never a nest provided for their immortal Souls? they will ere long flie out of their bodies like birds, and they will cry after them with the poor Emperour, Animula quo vadis? Poor Soul whither goeft thou? they make nefts and refting places for their bodies, but never think what shall become of their immortal Souls, never think of Eternity; they eat, they drink, they rife up to play, and in a moment go down to the grave, and their poor Souls into the place prepared for the Devil and his Angels. They spend their time, their money, their strength to earn and purchase Downbeds for those poor Carcasses, which when they have indulged what they can, must be laid upon the cold floor and take up their lodgings in the duft, but never regard their Souls, which cannot rest in these pillows, nor be always kept within the body. Surely these men have strange notions of Souls, (if indeed they think them of another (pecies from that of brutes:) Can they, (do they think) fpend Eternity in the air? I will affore them they shall not, (unless the Prince of the air shall make hell there to all Eternity.) Others there are that are more men than those : they have their thoughts fometimes about Eternity, long Eternity! and what provision they shall make for it, but have no patience to provide better for it than to perfuade themselves, That God is merciful, Christ died for all, &c. It may be in articulo mortis, at the point of death, they will be persuaded to call for the Sacrament. This indeed is a kind of an offer at the hole of the Rock (which indeed is full of mercy, but I fear the Souls lodging there should have been provided before; (though the Scripture tells us of one Vulture in a moment by an Almighty power near to it turn'd into a Dove which at that hour got in that no Soul might despair,) but I fear this is not to be trusted. There is a third fort of men who feem to be thus far convinced, hence they fo moch X X 2 press

Ver. 6.

press upon others righteousness: and we may say of them as Saint Paul faith of himfelf, Phil. 4. 4. If any other man thinketh be bath whereof to trust in the flesh, they have as much, if not more. They are of the Bock of Ifrael, of the Tribe of Benjamin, &c. They are the children of the Church, well-educated, baptifed in their infancy, touching the righteousness of the law blameless. Here now they are: Here they rest, this they trust to for Salvation. But heark you (Sirs.) this is not to be in the clefis of the Rock. Paul was got over this dunghill into the fecret places of the Afcents, winning Christ and found in bim; not having his own righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Chrift, the righteousness which is of God by faith; yea, and here must Christs Dove be: their voice is None but Christ, None but Christ. Nothing. but Christ for my Justification, Nothing but Christ for my Sanctification. Lord pardon me for Christs fake; Lord strengthen. quicken me by the grace of Christ, for without thy grace preventing me, operating in me, co-operating with me, I can do nothing. Not that a Believer expects that Christ should believe repent, &c. for him, or that Christs holy life should serve for his holiness. (as they would impose upon us who are so much for their own works,) and would load our Doctrine with what reproaches they can. My second note of Christs Dove will let you know that is not our meaning.

2. Christs Dove must alta petere, as she is in the elefts of the Rock Christ Fesus; trusting only in Christs righteousness, walking only in his strength: So, she speaks the things that are above: there is a masking in the Spirit, as well as a receiving of the Spirit, Gal. 5. Nor is any one in Christ (freed from condemnation,) but that Soul which masks not after the sless, but after the Spirit, Rom. 8.1. If you would know what that is, the Apostle expounds it, Rom. 8.5. minding the things of the Spirit: ver. 13. Through the Spirit mortifying the deeds of the body. seeking the things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God; setting our affections upon things which are above, not on the things of the earth, Phil. 3. 20. having our conversations in beaven. These are the Doves of Christ in the cless of the Rock. But surther

yet,

This notion affords a great deal of comfort to poor frighted conficiences, who do as it were flee away from God into the boles of Rocks. Here's the difference between a bold and impudent fin-

Use 3.

ner, and a poor wounded frighted Christian. The former at the day of Judgment, Rep. 6. 15. Shall bide bimself in the dens, and in the Rocks of the Mountains, and say to the Mountains and to the Rocks, sall on us; and bide us from the face of him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come. The latter in this life is sometimes slying to the Dens and to the Rocks, and wishing Rocks and Mountains to fall on it, and to hide it from the wrath of God. The comfort lies in two

things.

1. That Christs Dove is sometimes there. There bath no Temptation befallen you (saith the Apostle) but what is common to men. It is some comfort to a poor creature in affliction, to consider that its case is not singular, some others have been in like condition and have done well. To have a spot of sin, that is not the spot of Gods people; or a mound in the Spirit, which is not a wound of Gods Children, this is sad; but this timoration of Conscience, this frightment at the apprehensions of divine wrath, either upon, or without some grounds; 'tis no such wound but a Child of God may have, Job 31.23. Destruction from God was a terror to me; and in another place, I will say unto the Lord do not condemn me. I am afraid of thy Judgments, Psal. 119. 120. What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. But Secondly, which is the great consolation.

2. Christ will speak, and speak comfortably to bix Dove, though in the clests of the Rock. Hear him in the Text, O my Dove that are in the clests of the Rock, in the sceres place of ascents, let me bear thy voice, let me see thy countenance. This is the great frightment of a poor creature thus disturbed. Ah, I shall never see the face of my beloved, Christ will never look upon me more. It is in vain for me to pray, I am so troubled that I cannot speak; but why sayest thou O faced; why speakest thou O Isrzel; my may is hid from the Lord, and my judgment passed over by my God. Dost thou not hear? dost not thou know, that thou hast an High-Priest which can have compassion upon thy infirmities? But I shall have a fairer opportunity to enlarge upon this argument, when I come to speak to the Precept; I shall therefore conclude this exercise with one branch of Application more, sounded upon that notion of the cless of the Rock, as they are places of security and protedino.

What a security doth this notion afford us, against the sears Use. 4. of failing, or final failing,

1. It fecures us against our sears, concerning the collective Sponse, The Church of God. The Church (Brethren) is the bonse of Christ; he builded it, and he is no foolish builder, to build an house upon the Sand, which should fall by the washing of the Waves, and the beating of the winds upon it. No, he built it upon a Rock, the winds may blow, and the waves may beat, and a part of the house may fall, but the main of it shall not fall, because it is sounded upon a Rock. Nay, Christ is in the bonse, therefore it cannot sall, Psal, 46.5. God is in the midst of her sherefore she shall not be moved; God shall help her and that right-early. The Heathen may rage, the Kingdoms may be moved; but the Lord of Hosts is with her, and the God of Jacob is her refuge. The enemies, if they will, may go round about her; they may count her towers, and tell her bull wash; but God will be her God for ever and ever, she is in the clefts of the Rock.

Secondly, Lo bere the security of every particular Dove of Christ, every wuly believing Soul; there is not one of them, but is in the cleats of the Rocks, 1 Pet. 1.5. They are kept by the power of God through faith unto Salvation. Two things I would observe to

you.

- 1. That the Saints fecurity lies not in themfelves. The Doves security is not in its own strength, but it is in the Rock where it neffleth; it is not because the Dove is invincible, but because the Rock within which she is, is impenetrable, that she is not torn apieces by the Birds of prey. We shall be kept and that to Salvation, but it is through the power of God; in Christ is our firength found, Sampfon was but like another man without bis locks; but while his locks were not cut off, no gates could keep him in, no withs, no cords could bind him. Saint Paul that could do all things through Christ that strengthened him, was weak as water, not sufficient to think one good thought; yea Peter himself was nothing extra banc petram; without this Rock, Christ lookt but off him a little, and a Maid in the High-Priefts Hall was too hard for Therefore be that stands must take beed lest be fall. If the Dove keeps close to the Ro & the is well enough; but her fecurity is in the Rock, not in her own wings. It is through faith, we are kept as well as by the power of God to Salvation. The power of God is that which keeps us; but our faith must fly to that power of God.
 - 2. Their feeurity is certain, Il. 33. 16. The Righteous mans defence

desence is the munition of Rocks; bread shall be given him, bis ways thall befure. His flate is certain, no adversaries from without shall hurt him, any more than an enemy shall hurt him; that is, within the munition of a Rock: Do you ask-how he shall live? how he shall be maintained? the Prophet tells you bread shall be given him. I give unto them eternal life (faith Christ) and they shall never perish; neither thall any man pluck them out of my hand, my father which gave them me is greater than all, no man is able to plack them out of my Fathers band, I and my Father are one, Joh. 10. 28, 29, 30. See there the Dove in the cleft of an impregnable Rock, the theep in the hand of a sufficient Shepherd: Fear not therefore, O thou Doveof Christ, neither be faint-bearted. This Doctrine speaketh to you that are of a fearful heart ; faving, bestrong fear not your God will come and fave you; here God speaking to you as in If. 41. 10. fear thou not for I am with thee; be not dismayed for I am thy God. I will frengthen thee, I will belp thee, yea I will uphold thee with the band of my Righteon [nef. I would not therefore have Christians. fecure, finfully fecure, letting down their watch, neglecting their pressing after Holiness; but I would have them believingly secure. keep their eye upon the Rock, keep close unto the Rock, walk frictly with God, and fear not the temptations of the world, by its flatteries or frowns, nor of the flesh, nor of the Devil. 'Tis but infirmity for the Dove to quake that is in the Rock. 'Fis but finful infirmity for you to be afraid, that any thing shall separate. you from Chrift, If. 41. 14. fear not, thou worm Jacob and you men of Ifrael (faith God,) I will bely thee, faith the Lord, and thy redeemer the boly one of Ifrzel. I will conclude with that of Saint Paul, a Language which every true Child of God may be brought. to speak, (and the Lord bring us to it,) Rom. 8. 35, 36, 37; 38, 39. Who Shall Separate us from the Love of Chrit? Shall trabulation, or diffress, or perfecution, or Famine, or nakedness, or peril or Sword? As it is written, for thy fake are we killed all the day-long, weare accounted as sheep for the Stugbter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am perfraded that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things prefent, two things to come, nor beighth, nor depth, nor any other creature, first feparate us from the love of God, which is in Fefus Christiour Lords.

Cant. 2. 14. pur auch auch and

fire thate is certain, vous verbacista, on without this

Let me see thy countenance, let me bear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.

TE have done with our Lords Compellation of his Spoule, and have taken notice of his comparison of her to a Dove, and the notice he took of her circumstance, as she was in the clefts of the Rock in the fecret places of the flairs or afcents. Ah! infinite love! that the Lord should humble himself to follow his Dove into the clefts of a Rock, (taking Rock as an obscure private place;) but he is not like the Hawk that follows the Dove to make a prey of it, and leaves it when it is got into its hiding-place; he follows his Dove for other ends, and therefore faith, Let me fee thy countenance, &c. he is not like the Bird of prey, that cannot follow the Dove into the cleft of a Rock, and is therefore forced there to leave her; no, he fees her in her fecret places. He is not only pleased with her when he seeth her picking her meat, or trimming her Feathers in the open airs but when the is in the clefts of the Rock, he hath a pleasure in her, and therefore faith; let me fee thy countenance, let me bear thy voice. Two things you fee he would have, he would fee ber, he would hear her, feeing and hearing you know are the two Senfes, by which rational beings have communion with her. The object of fight is the counternance, let me fee the countenances (faith he) the object of bearing is the voice, let me bear thy voice. A sweet argument is joined to each of thefe : Let me fee thy countenance, for thy countenance is comely. Let me hear thy voice, for-by voice is sweet. I begin with the first of these and shall joyn the precept and argument together.

Prop.

That even while Christs Dove is in the clefts of the Rock, ber Lord

defires to fee ber countenance, and accounts it comely.

For the first words of the Proposition, describing the Spoules circumstances, you know they were the Subject of my last discourse; where amongst other things (as to my present purpose impertinent;) I took notice to you of the cless of the Rock; the feeret place of the ascents as places of privacy and obscurity, and security, whither the Dove sometimes slyeth, being winged only whit

her own fear, and misapprehensions of danger, sometimes being pursued by Birds of prey. My notion of it here shall only be extended so far. So as the meaning is: when the Church of Christ, when the particular believing Soul, is under its own affrightments, or under the greatest violences in the most obscure, low, despicable state and condition, yet even then the Lord Jesus Christ doth not despise or contemn her, doth not forsake, nor neglect her; but desires to see her countenance, and even then her countenance is in his eyes very comely: here is something applied, 1. That she had bid ber face. 2. something expressed, he desired to see her face. There is a time when the Spouse, the believing Soul, hideth her face from the Lord Jesus Christ; you read in Scripture of a four or sive-fold hiding the face.

1. There is an biding of the face in anger. Thus God sometimes hideth his face from his Spouse; thus, If. 54.8. In a little wrath I bid my face from them, your sins have hid his face from you, Is. 59.2. Thus Elijah, thus Jonah, in some displeasure hid their faces from

God.

2. There is an biding of the face in contempt. Thus sometimes we scorn to look upon a person through pride and contempt. In this sense the Prophet speaks Is. 53.3. and when we saw him, we hid as it were our faces from him; which amounteth to what the Evangelist saith, be came amough his own and they received him not. Thus the Spouse, the true Spouse of Christ, never hidech her face from her Beloved, 1 Pet. 2.7. To those who believe he is precious.

But Thirdly, There is an biding the face, arising from modesty or shamefacedness. Thus Rebeccab (when she met Isac) took out a vail, and covered her face. Thus the Angels in Heaven hide their faces from the glorious God, partly through weakness and inability to behold his glory, partly from a reverential sense of the infinite distance betwixt their creator and them: thus the gracious Soul bideth its face from God, when it draws nigh unto him.

Fourthly, There is a hiding the face from guilt. Thus when Adam had eaten of the tree of forbidden fruit, he bid bimfelf from God. Thus the Publican, when he came into the Temple, flood afar off, and the Prodigal was ashamed to lift open his eyes. There is fo much guilt cleaveth unto the very best of Gods people, as maketh them hide their faces, through shame when they draw

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near to God, Exra. 9. 6. Omy God (faith Exra.) I am assamed, and bluss to life up my face unto thee my God; for our iniquities are increased over our beads, and our trespasses are grown up, even

unto the Heavens.

Lastly, Fear also will make one to bide bis face. Thus men hide their faces because of enemies. Elijab, and the Prophets hid their faces in caves, during the time of Ababs persecution. The Spouse had hid her face; either from the face of men driven into corners by their violence, as the Dove is driven into the clefts of the Rock, by the Bird of prey that pursueth; or else, through a fear of the wrath of God, or a shame in the sense of her own guilt, or a spamefacedness, not daring, nor being so bold as to look upon an holy and spotless God. Now to this Spouse thus hiding her face, Christ calls,

Let me fee thy face. We will next inquire into the meaning of that.
Four things will I think comprehend the full import of these

words. The phrase therefore denotes.

1. The friendliness of ber beloved to ber, he desires to fee ber face. This is vox amica. The displeased person desireth not to see the face of the person, whom he or she is displeased at. See my face no more (faith angry Pharaob to Mofes,) Exod. 10. 28. when David was displeased with Absolom, he would not see his face. It is mentioned as a note of Gods great friendlines to Mofes, Exod. 22. 11. that the Lord spake to bim face to face. Christ hath a tender love. even for the poor frighted Souls of his people, they like the Publiean, Lu. 18. 13. Stand afar off, and dare not fo much as lift up their eyes to Heaven; when they can do no more but frise their bands upon their Breafts, and cry, God be merciful to us finners; even then Christ hath'a love and kindness for them; they look down upon the Earth, Christ bids them look up. Let me (faith he) fee thy face, fir up thy Faith; hold up thy face with confert, come some me, (fo Mr. Ainfworth gloffeth upon the words of the Text.) This is the great question of a poor afflicted Christian in these circumflance? doth Christ love me? what me? that am such a signer? me that have so much fin and corruption? so little Faith. and love? I have a dirty face, dirtied with fin and filthines ; I' have a blubbered face, befineared with my owntears. I dare not look up, furely there's nothing in me to be defired ; yes, faith Christ, my Dove that art in the clefts of the Rocks, ket me fee sby face; though it be dirty, though it be blubbered with forsow,

yet I love thee: the Mother loves the Child, though its face be not

fo clean as it thould be. Let me fee thy face.

Secondly, It denotes the delight of her Beloved in her. This is Bezaes note. Quid boc autem reieft, &c. (faith he) what is this thing? are not all things then naked, and open before that God with whom we have to do? why doth he that reads every heart call to us to let him fee our face ? he fearebeth the heart, and trieth the reins, er. 11. 20. be knows our down-fitting, and our up-rifing, be understands our thoughts afar off, be encompasset our paths, and our lying down, and is acquainted with all our ways : There is not a word in our tongues, but the Lord knoweth it altogether, Pfal. 139. 23, 4. and be particularly eyes and observeth his Spouse. Canaan is the Land which God careth fer, the eyes of the Lord are always upon it, from the Deut. 11: 10 beginning of the year to the end of the year. Christ here doth not defire to fee the Brides face to inform him, be needed not that any man (hould tell bim what is in the beart of man. There is a view. for delight and pleasure, as well as for information. The loving Husband defires to fee his Wives face, though he knows all the lines in it, because he a hath delight in ber. Christ faith let me fee thy face to let us know, that he hath delight in ber : you know Solomon telleth us that before the Mountains were lettled, while be mas Prov. 8.25.24. with his Father, as one brought up with him, and was dayly his delight, rejoicing always before bim; be was rejoicing in the babitable parts of the earth, and bis delight was with the Sans of men. Therefore he here defireth to fee her face. Thus God when he had created the world, is faid to have looked upon all that he had made, and he fam that it was good; he delighted in his own work, Christ hath not only a kindness and friendship for his Spoule in the clefts of the Rocks, but even at that time, and under those circumstances, he hath a delight in her. That's the second thing.

Thirdly. This phrase denotes, that freedom and boldness, and familiarity; which a believing Soul may use with the Lord Fefus v. Durbum all Thus, Gen. 43.5. Fofepb told his brethren, that if they loc. Christ. did not bring their Brother Benjamin they should fee bis face na more, that is, he would have no more freedom and familiarity with them, and foin other Texts; and fo the Scripture ufeth the phrase of seeing God face to face Gen. 32. 30. Exod- 32. 12. Deut. 5. 4. all which and fuch-like Texts must be interpreted of a great freedom, and boldness, and familiarity, which God allowed Mofes, and his other eminent Servants, with himself. God is

not only kind and friendly to his Spoule, but he alloweth them great familiarity, and an holy boldness with him, yea and that Dove of his, who is frighted by her own jealoufy and fear into the clefis of the Rock, might if he would, if her own unbelief and corruption did not hinder, come freely unto him, serve God with boldness, and holy boldness. It was one end of Christ coming, to deliver us from our enemies, that me might ferve bim without fear, in bolinels and Righteoufnels, Luk. 1.74. In him we have not only access, but boldness with access, Eph. 3. 12, Heb. 10. 19. Having boldnels to enter into the bolieft by the blood of Fefus, v. 22. Let us draw near with a true beart in full affurance; fo, Heb. 4. 16. Let us come boldly to the Throne of Grace. The believer may boldly fay the Lord wmy belp, Heb. 13. 6. and they may boldly come unto hime I hope I need not tell you, that there is a boldness of impudence, exclusive even of filial and reverential fear; this is finful, and by no means becomes a worm coming into the presence of the Lord of Heaven and Earth, and a boldness of Faith, exclusive of finful di-Aruftful fear; this (not the other) is the Saints boldness: The Spoule of Christ is the favourite of Heaven. The favourite knoweth how to keep his distance from his Prince, and to avoid impudent rudeness with him, yet to use his priviledg in a modest freedom, and familiarity with his Prince, which another not under the like circumstances cannot use.

Laftly. This phrase denotes the duty of a believer, in the exereises of faith and bolinefs. Thus Mr. Ainsworth Interprets it by Gen. 17. 1. walk before me and be thou perfect, and by that of the Apostle, Rom. 12. 1. offer up your bodies unto God, as a living and acceptable Sacrifice which is your reasonable Service. Thus the Caldee Paraphraft, fhew me thy Righteous works. Thus also the learned Beza gloffeth upon this Text, petit ut interius et exterius, Chrifto exhibeat eorum beneficiorum effecta, quibus in bunc usum Deus illam offecit. The face is pars bominis exterior, the external part of a man by which he appeareth to the world; the Spoule of Christ ought not vivere fibi to live meerly to herfelf, and to fatisfy herfelf that the is all glorious within, and that the Lord knoweth the uprightness of her heart before him; but fie muft fhew muto Chrift ber face, the must shew her faith by her works. The profane man, the Hypocrite, will tell you they have good hearts, but a good heart is not enough for the Spoule of Christ; as he sees his peoples hearts, and that is the main thing indeed, which he looks after, fo

he also must see their face, the goodness of their hearts expressed in the holiness of their life. Thus much may serve for the Explication of this phrase, Let me see thy face; Christ desireth to see his Sponses face. But the Text addeth, Thy countenance is comely; and according to it, I added in the Proposition, That in Christs eyes, the countenance of the Believer is comely: 1. What is here meant by Countenance, 2. How it is comely.

Magdalenes face was comely in the eyes of Christ when it was all wet with tears, supplying her hands with water to wash her Lord's feet, which she wiped with the hairs of her head. Davids face was comely when he washed his Couch with his tears, and his eyes ran down with Rivers of Water, because men kept not the

Lords Law.

2. Secondly, It may be understood of her inward countenance, the complexion of her Soul: Her whole person is comely. Take her in the whole, she is Christs fair One. Will you know bor she

is comely ?

1. She is comely imputatively, Ez. 16. 24. It was perfed, through my comeliness which I had put upon thee. Amongst men, that woman may be comely in the eyes of one. In whom another can fee no comeliness, nothing for which the is to be defired, the World feeth no beauty in a child of God; hence they revile, reproach, a. buse them, they are as dirty as can be, but in Christs Eyes their countenance is comely, but this it could not be unless there were a real comelines in her; Christ cannot be deceived in his judgment. of comeliness, though fond men may be. Do you ask then what. is the Believers real beauty, what is her real comelines? I answer, it is Christs comelines put upon her that is imputed and reckoned to her. About this the present generation raiseth great questions: Some would have no righteousness of Christ imputed to the Soul neither adive nor poffive but the Soul only to fland upon its:own legs, the righteousness which itself spins out, accepted upon the Covenant of Grace. I fear these new Opinionists will prove miserable comforters to a diffressed Conscience. Others therefore will allow. Christs passive righteonsness, i. e. his obedience to God in suffering the wrath and curse of God due to Sin to be imputed. By this means the guilt of the Soul before God is removed, and the Soul frands redus in curia, discharged in the Court of God; so that now it may fing the Apostles Song, who is he that condemnesh ? it

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ir God that juftiffeth, it is Chrift that died, yea rother that to refen again. But this doth not render the Soul formofam in confpelle. beautiful in the Eye of God ; we therefore fay there is alfo an ... dive righteoufness imputed to us. Christ was not made of God only fin for w, but he was made for us wildome and righteonfinels : Will any Soul ask what need is there of this? I answer, to make the Soul comely . Suppose, (if you could suppose such a thing amongst men;) the Princes Son in love with a poor condemned woman, he payeth a price to his Father for the womans life, and obtains, so that now the is nubilis, in a capacity to live and to marry to whom the will, but the is poor, the is cloathed with rags, the is not in an habit fit for a Prince. The Prince therefore out of his Wardrobe fupplies her with Robes, Jewels and other Ornaments ; fo the is made comely through his comeliness. A poor Soul by Christs passive Obedience, by his being become a curse, and suffering the wrath of God due to fin, is discharged from her guilt, from the Obligation the was under to death, but fill the is a filthy nafty creature, still she is cloathed with rags, and is not a Bride prepared for fuch an Husband; the indeed now hath a righteoufnels, an inherent righteouthels; for in the fame hour in which God juftifieth the Soul he doth also regenerate the Soul and infuse new habits of Grace, in the ftrength of which the acteth : but this righteousness is a rag, a pitiful imperfect righteousness; Christs active righteousness is therefore imputed and reckoned to her : for though it be true that some tell us, that Christs actual Obedience of the Law was the obedience of the humane Nature. which being a creature was so far indebted to God : yet by their leave, those acts of righteousness were the acts of a person that was God and Man, and the hypoftatical union of the divine Nature to the humane, added an infinite value and vertue unto those acts; to that he had of this righteoutness more than enough for himself, even enough to be reckoned and imputed to all Believers: To that by vertue of a gracious imputation of it, there is the comeliness of Christ put upon the Soul; and, as the Prophet speaks, the Soul is made perfect and comely, through this comeliness of Christ. The Apostle tells us in Col. 2. 10. that in Christ me are compleat. Two ways we are compleat in Christ, 1. Complealy righteous by justification through his bloud, 2. Compleatly comely and beautiful by imputation of his allive obedience. But this is not all.

s. Secondly, The Spoule of Christ is also comely through an inberent comelinefs, Cant. 1. 10. Her cheeks are comely with rows of Fewels, ber neck with chains of gold. Thefe are the habits of her graces: the other was a Comeline's only imputed and reckon'd to her as if it were hers. This is a comeline's inberent and dwelling in ber, by reason of that change which God hath wrought in the powers of her Soul: and all her practice of these habits are exceeding comely in the Eyes of the Lord Jefus. Grace is a comely thing in the eyes of Christ; it is lovely in the root, in the bud, in the bloom. The Spoule of Christ if the be in the exercises of her grace is comely, though the be in the clefts of the Rocks. I have now done with the Explication of the Proposition in both Branches: I shall not need inlarge upon the proof. For the general terms: the Scripture proves it plainly they are the words of the Text, Lemme fee thy face; for the particulars by which I opened this general, you had the proof annexed to every particular. Now if you ask me whence it is that the Lord hath thus far indulged his Spoule, and accounts her so comely? I answer; Who can give a reason of Love? even of that Love which is betwixt creatures: who can give a reason why one friend is so dear to another, who perhaps was never in a capacity to merit at his hands, why many a Wife should be so lovely in the eyes of her Husband ? much less are we able to give an account of divine Love, Moles could give no other account of the Lords diftinguishing favour to the Jews, Dent. ro. 15. Only the Lord had a delight in their fathers to love them, and be chofo their feed offer them. Why doth the Lord defire to fee the face of his Spoule? why doth he account their neountenance comely? Only because the Lord had an eternal Delight in them to love them, to fix his heart upon them. This is the original reason: for no man hath given unto God first. Inwhen once the Lord hath put his comelines upon us, when once his new creation is made in any Soul, then he hath a real cause in us, though it be not originated in us. As the Lard when he what created the World Gen 1. 21. looked over his own work. other he had made, and faw it very good ! fo when the Lord hath juffified and regenerated a poor guilty, ugly, fifthy Soul ; he can, lother look over what he hath wrade, and be pleafed, and take a dewhight hir as very good she hath made it comely, and it is comely. I Locine no wood the Application of this Point you ber an mood

In the firth place, Lerevery devout Soul be here wrape in fito Ufe. 1;

an holy Extely! and cry out with the Apossle, Ob the heighth?

the heighth, the length! the heeadth! the depth of the love of God in I fus Christ to poor sinful creatures and worms of the Earth!

Me, thy face, fee thy face, thy countenance is comely; Every word hath an accent upon it; every word scrueth up our hearts to an higher peg of admiration; who is this but the eternal Son of God, but he who is God over all blessed for ever? he that is continually beholding the face of his Eternal Father; and if he would please himself with the face of Creatures, thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousands of glorious Angels and spotless Souls are ever before him; Ah! that ever his delight should be amongst the sons of men!

2. Thy face! Lord! my face? What is it more than the face of a dirty worm, a face that hath hardly a line in it of Gods Creation. My eyes are full of vanity, blubbered with unbelief, dirtied with coverousness, bloud-shotten with passion; my lips have been blacked with idle filthy words, with murmuring and unbelief. See my face! Lord, I blush to shew my face unto thee, and have hid it from thee through shame. I am assamed to shew my

face to thy people, yet this is the face our Lord will fee.

3. Let me fee thy face; Bleffed God, haft thou then a kindnels for fuch a vile nothing as I am? may I be free, and bold, and familiar? See my face? Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst fee my face; fend me but the meanest of thy Meffengers to visit me. I shall esteem it a great mercy. My face! Lord, I have been in the clefts of the Rock, in the fecret place of the flairs. I have been finfully afraid to draw nigh to thee, Lord, let me be in the hole still fo it be in the hole of that Rock; No faith Christ Let me fee shy face. I am thy friend as hardly as thou thinkest of me; I have a delight in thee though thou fayeft . The Lord bath for faken me, my God bath forgotten me; whatever the apprehentions of thy unbelieving heart are, thou maift be free and bold with me, Les me fee thy face, for thy countenance is comely. Methinks I hear a poor Soul faying, my dear Saviour, with what eyes doft thou look? I look upon my felf in the glass of the Law, I fee no Ethiopion blacker: I turn and look upon my reflection in the glass of the Gospel, there I see an unbelieving heart full of doubts, full of fears, full of reasonings against thy Promites; the World looks upon me, and they fee no comelines in me a nothing for which I should be defired; and doth my Lord fay, Thy countenance is comeby? I must now confess that God Seeth not as man seeth. Methinks this should fend every Soul away from the presence of God this night transported with the thoughts of divine Love, and wondring what this means, Let me see thy face, for thy countenance is comely.

Is there a Dove of Christ here? (I hope there are many that Use. 2. are in the clefts of the Rock Christ Jesus.) But is there any of them that is crept into any other Rock? That, I mean, through frights of its own conscience, or through the frights of the Fowler the great adversary of Souls is in the clefts of the Rock, hiding as it were its way from the Lord, asraid to draw nigh to God in Prayer; asraid almost to hear a Sermon, to receive a Sacrament, to have any communion with God, those that cannot think upon God but they are troubled. To you, Christ speaks; Mark it, It is, O my Dove that are in the clefts of the Rock: and what saith the? Let me see thy face, for thy countenance is comely. Mark, I befeech you, how many good words my Master hath sent me with this day to your Souls.

1. He hath fent me to tell you, 1. That be bath a kindness for you: yea, though you be in the clefts of these Rocks so ill-fuited to his Love, he would elle never have faid to you, Let me fee thy face. Is not this good news to you who have been faying, God hath forgotten to be gracious, his mercy is clean gone, and that for evermore in the midft of thefe dark and melancholick thoughts? Hear your Beloved (if Christ be he) as it were tilen out of his place, and faying. Let me fee thy fate, for thy countenance is comety. Might not Christ have justly rewarded your unbelieving heart by faying According to your faith fo let it be mito you? Might not he have faid, There lie in your holes; but he affures you he is miflaken by you, his heart is not as your heart, nor his ways as your ways. Doefi thou fay, Ah! if I could hear Christ thus speak from Heaven to me? And must Christ make windows in Heaven before thou wilt believe? Is not his word enough? Doth not he there fay unto thee, Let me fee thy face?

2. Nay more, he hath fent me to tell thee, He bath a delight in thee; for so much I have told you the phrase importest. Solomon hath long since rold you that his delight was with the fone of men, and why not in thee; if a Dove? Thy being in the elests of the Rocks: thy frighted, disconsolate, disturbed estate that not hinder; for you hear him calling here to those Doves of his that

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Efry satt.

are there. It was to her that was afflitted and toffed with tempefts, that he makes that Promife, Efay 54. 11. I will lay thy floor with fair colours, and thy foundations with Saphires; and I will make thy windows of Agates, and thy gates with Carbuncles, and all thy bor-

ders of pleafant stones: Is not this enough?

3. He hath sent me to tell thee, That show maist come boldly to bim. So much he importeth (as I have shewed thee,) when he saith, Let me see thy face. Thou sayest, may I come to him? may I believe? may I have indeed any sellowship and communion with him? would it not be too much boldness? No, saith Christ, let me see thy face. Come boldly to the throne of Grace with sull assurance; Come, and welcome, let me see thy face! Ah, but saith a poor Soul! I am a dirty creature, I am a black and filthy creature; If I had any thing of beauty and comelines in me, but I can see nothing, nothing but what may plunge me in the ditch of despair and make me an abhorrence to my self. To answer this.

4. He hath fent me to tell thee, that thy countenance is comely; Comely, through his comelines put upon thee; Comely, through his new habits created in thee: Tell me then, O thou beloved of my Master! what wouldst thou hear more? what does thou then in thy Cave? why hidest thy self from him who seeketh after thee? Come forth, and let the Lord see thy face in the fruits of thy faith, in the exercises of thy grace; Let him see that sace which (however thy false glass made up of some melancholick humours, of some temptations of Satan, of some unbelief in thine own heart, may represent and restect it to thee,) yet he judgeth

Is this the language of Christ indeed? Oh! what a difference

comely. But thirdly.

there is betwixt earth and heaven, betwixt the defiret and the judgments of the men of the world, and the defined and judgments of christ? What more contemptible (if not abominable creatures) to the great finners of the Earth than the faces of the innocent Doves of Christ? They cannot abide to see the faces of the Lords holy ones: Christ saith, Let me see thy face. With what anger doth Pharash look upon Moses, and chargeth him to see his sace no more? With what scorn doth Haman look upon Mordeeay sitting in the Kings gate? On the other side, with what kindness did the Lord look upon Peter, ever after he had denied his Master? How kindly doth Christ here speak to his Dove, though in

Use. 3.

the clefts of the Rocks? There is no generation in the World more unlovely in the eyes of the World than the generation of those that are pure in heart, of those who seek the Lords face. But doth Christ speak so? No, he saith, Thy countenance is comely. Let then the men of the World look asquint upon them that sear the Lord: let them say, see our face no more: Let them look scornfully upon you; concern not your self in their anger, nor in their scorn; the Lord saith to you, Let me see thy face, for thy countenance is comely. If Christ judgeth you comely, it may be a small thing to you to be judged of men.

Fourthly, Doth Christ say to bis Spouse, Let me see thy counter Use nance. Doth he desire communion with us? doth he count us cornely? Oh, how should our souls thirst after nearest sellowship and communion with him? 2. Oh, how precious should Christ be in our eyes? The force of this Conclusion dependent upon the infinite advantage the Soul hath by a seeing of Christs face, compared with the No-advantage that Christ hath by seeing our faces. 2. Upon the infinite beauty and comelines that is in Christ above the beauty and comelines that can be in us. There is a threefold vision of

Christs countenance.

1. The first is, by the eye of Faith in a direct act, a looking to him as the Jews look'd to the brazen-Serpent which was lifted up in the Wilderness. The advantage of this is the same as to the Jews, an healing of our wounds by fin, an healing of Transgressi-

ons, Eternal life.

2. The second is by a more reflex at, when we see him, and know we see him: we do not only see him in a glass darkly, acting Faith upon him by the advantage of his Word, but with open face even in this life we behold the glory of God, and are here satisfied with the Lords likeness. Oh, how sweet is this sight! The advantage of it is a full peace of Conscience, a joy in the Holy Ghost, a rejoycing in Tribulation, a Triumph over all our Spiritual Enemies, a rejoycing in the hopes of the glory of God.

2. But there is yet a third Vision of Christs face; Divines call it the Beatistical Vision, a seeing of God face to face, a seeing him as he is. The advantage of this, Eye hath not seen, Ear hath not heard, it cannot enter into the heart of man to conceive. In short, it is an unchangeable estate of persect eternal selicity; But alas, what

advan-

advantage hath our bleffed Lord by feeing the face of us poor worms? wherein can a man by shewing the Lord his face be pro-

fitable unto his Maker?

2. Confider what an infinite beauty and comelines is in Chrift. compared with the comeliness of poor creatures: What a Nothing is our comeliness? Have we any thing of comeliness in us ? It is not innate, but adventitious : not originally in us, but put upon us, a comelinels meerly by reflexion, as we are related unto this perfect Idea of all Beauty, of all Perfection; Or if we have any inherent Beauty, yet how imperfect is it? for a line of beauty, how many crocked lines of deformity have we in our Souls? a little Faith, a great deal of Unbelief; a little Love, and a great want of Love, a little of a spiritual Mind; But ah! how much of a carnal heart? Doth Christ desire our beauty? Doth Christ fay of thee, (O thou imperfect Soul,) thy countenance is comely? What wilt thou fay of him, who is without fpot or wrinckle? Who is the chiefest of ten thousand? who is Totus defideria, altogether defires. Certainly, it is all our duty to fay, Lord let me fee thy face, for thy countenance is comely; Let me behold thy face in righteoufness, let me fee thy face in Ordinances : let me fee thy face in visions of peace, in the reflexions of thy love upon my Soul; for thy favour is better than Life, thy love is better than Wine. Let me fee thy face in glory, for thy countenance is comely. As an argument to persuade you to this, give me leave to tell you, that these desires will be very acceptable to Christ; for as he faith, Let me fee thy countenance, for it is comely : So he also faith, Let me bear thy voice, for it is freet. But of this (God willing) hereafter.

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Cant. 2. 14.

Let me fee thy countenance, let me bear thy voice, for freek is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.

Am come to the Bridegrooms second motion or precept to his Beloved. He hath already desired to see her countenance, and hath told her that her countenance is comely; that we have done with here he desires he may bear ber voice, and as an argument he addeth an argument taken from his delight in her voice. Thy voice, saith he, is sweet. The Proposition is this.

The Lord Jefus defireth to bear his Spoufe [his Churches, bis be- Prop.

lieving Souls voice] and accountetb ber voice freet.

Here (as in the other Proposition) are two parts. 1. He desireth to hear her voice, 2. he accounted her voice sweet. The only thing by way of explication, which we here have to enquire upon is.

What voice of the Spoule her Lord here meaneth.

I take it to be a good rule, Ubi lex divina non distinguit non est distinguendum, to make no restriction or distinction where the Scripture speaks generally, unless some other Scripture feemeth to require it, and so to Interpret it, of every voice which is heard from the Church, or from the believing Soul, either directed unto Chrift, or uttered for Chrift. Junius and Tremelius, interpret it by the es grata mibi, thou art acceptable to me, fo making a metonimy; but I shall handle it more strictly than so, restraining it to the voice, but comprehending whatfoever of the voice is directed to Christ, or uttered for Christ, neither restraining it to Preaching Greg. Mag. as some do, nor to prayer and praises as others do. But stewing D. s. Pone you that the voice of the Church, the voice of every believing Soul, any way either used to Christ or on the behalf of Christ is defired of him, and is sweet in his ears : But this general must be opened in some particulars, and though it may be reduced to fewer, I shall open it in four particulars, shewing you that the Lord defires them all; why they are freet, I thall discourse speaking to the fecond branch of the Proposition; when I shall come to show you that ber poice is freet in Chrifts ears. Dor brod of sov atolai

1. In the Church of Christ, there is now instruentis et profitentis.

The

1 Tim. 3. 15.

2 Tim.1.13.

Jude 3.

The voice of one that instructeth, and publickly ownerh and profeffeth fome propositions of truth: I will put both these together. because of their relation to, and dependance one upon another. The Church of God is called, the Pillar and the ground of truth : sulos ni espainua riis annoias. I shall not trouble you with our quarrel with the Papifts about the sense of that Text. Protestant Interpreters, make it a Metaphor drawn from the actions of men. who use to hang up upon some publick posts, publick edicts and Proclamations, declaring the pleasure of Princes, or states for their Subjects demeanours: God hath made choice of his Church, as that body of people to which he hath committed his Oracles, as that post or pillar, where he hath hung out to be seen, read and underflood, of all what is his pleasure men should believe. Hence you read of a form of found words, which Timothy is commanded to bold fast, 2 Tim. 1. 13. but this form is there expounded, which thou bast beard from me. The Church is but the Pillar, not the author of truth; every Church of Christ doth openly own and profess the Siftem of Gospel-Doctrine. This voice the Lord desireth to hear, Jude exhorteth those to whom he writes to contend for the Faith once delivered to the Saints ; which can be understood of nothing but the Doctrine of Faith, hence Christians are so often called upon for unity in truth, to think and speak the same thing, 2 Cor, 1. 10. To fland fast in one Spirit, and to be of one mind, Pbil. 1. 27. Pbil. 2. 2. for there is but one Faith, Epb. 4. 5. Now this voice of the Spouse owning and professing the truths of Christ, is not only the voice of the beart, owning and professing the Faith, as it hath been revealed by Christ, and those inspired by him; but is expressed by instruction, whether Preaching or Catechifing, (which is but a species of teaching.) Gregory the great interprets the Text of Preaching, (nor certainly is it to be excluded:) Christ desires to hear the voice of his publick Ministers in his Church Preaching, that is opening unto others, the truths of the Gospel, unfolding the misteries of Godliness, and as the ambaffadours of Christ, intreating men to believe and to be reconciled to God. To this purpose are the frequent precepts to the 70 when Christ fent them out, Matt. 10.7. To the Apostles and their fucceffors to the end of the world, Matt. 28. fo the Apostle to Timothy, 2 Tim. 4. 2. preach the word, be instant in season and out of Season; yea the Lord requires and defires it of every believing Soul. though-not in the publick meetings of the Church, yet in the Church,

Church, which is in their house; as Abraham is recorded in the old Testament, for instructing his family; and God commanded his ancient Church of the Fews, Deut. 6. 7. that they bould teach bis laws unto their Children, and talk of them when they lay down, and when they role up, when they fat in their boufe, and walked by the may; and had it not been a practice under the Gospel, Timothy had never from a Child known from the Scriptures, 2 Tim. 3. 15. the knowledg of them dwelt in his Mother Eunice, and his Grandmother Lois, and was so communicated unto him; and this the Lord defires, yea and out of our boufes too : when thou art converted, faith Christ, frengthen thy bretbren; Christ desireth to hear the voice of his Saints, speaking to others the things which belong to his Kingdom. This is the first voice of the Spouse, which her beloved defireth to hear, he defireth to hear her voice openly owning, avowing and acknowledging the truths of his Gospel. The voice of his Ministers in it, openly expounding the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, and arguing them into a belief of them, and perswading them to an embracing of them, and to a conformity to them. The voice of every particular believing Soul in his station, to his Family, to his Neighbour, opening the truths of God to them, instructing them in the way of God more perfectly, as Aquila and Priscilla did Apollos, Acts 18.26. But this is not all the voice of his Spoule which he defireth to hear.

· Secondly, There is vox arguentis, the hath also a reproving voice. Such a voice there is and must be in the Church of Christ. Timothy is not only commanded, 2. Tim. 4. 2. to Preach but also to reprove and to rebuke. There is a fraterna correptio (as the Schoolmen call it) a brotherly reproof, founded indeed in the law of nature, which teacheth us to prevent our neighbours mischief. established by the law of God, Lev. 19. 17. Thou shalt not bate thy brother in thine beart, thou shalt in any wife rebuke thy neighbour, and not fuffer fin upon bim, established in the Gospel. If the brother fin against thee, go and tell him of it betwixt thee and him alone, Mast. 18. 15. If be bear thee, thou baft wonthy Brother. There is a pastoral correption, which is the Duty of all Pastors of Churches. To them the precept is directed, I Tim. 4. 2. Rebuke, exbort; you know what God faid to Ezekiel, when he made him his watch-man over the boule of Ifrael, and the Apostle useth the same Metaphor, when he tells Christians, that their Pastors watch for their Souls; and the elders of Ephefin are commanded to match,

Ad. 8.20. 31. and there is an ecclefiaftical correption, which is the Act of the whole Church by their officers: this is chablished in the Gofpel. Matt. 18. 17. These who are over men in the Lord must admonish them, I Thest. 5. 12. 2 Thest. 3. 15. yea, and if they will not hear them, they must reject them, Tit. 3. 10. Matt. 18.17. This is vox Sponfe, the voice of Christs Spoule, though to men a more rough and unpleasing voice than the other; yet a voice which you fee the beloved defireth, and requireth from his Spoule. Let me hear thy voice as avowing my truths, opening them to others, perswading them to embrace them in their hearts by Faith, and to conform their lives to the rule of them: fo also reproving those, that with their tongues or in their lives deviate, and swerve from them, reproving them privately, reproving them by a Rastoral Authority, reproving them openly, and rejecting them if they will not hearken. Upon, and for the hearing of this voice, Christ commends the Church of Ephesus, Rev. 2. 2. she could not bear them that were evil. The tried them that faid they were Apostles and were not. For Christ not hearing of this voice of the Church of Pergamus is blamed, v. 14. and the Church of Thyatyra, . v. 26.

Thirdly, There is (vox confitentis) another voice of the Spoule which Christ defireth to hear, that is, her voice confessing. There is a twofold confession the Scripture speaketh of. 1. The confession of the truth. 2. The confession of fin: the latter I intend not to touch under this head, but the former only; viz. The confession of Gods truths. It differs from the profession of the truth; because this properly relates to troublesome times, suffering times; when Christians are called forth to own the truths of God in opposition to enemies; and indeed this is not fo much the voice of a Church, (though a whole Church may be perfecuted, and fo called forth to own the truth of God in the face of oppolition, as the voice of the particular believing Soul, for in such a time ordinarily the Church is scattered, but particular Christians are often feized on, and called to this confession of Christ, and in such a case it is their duty to let Christ hear this voice; with the mouth confession is made, Rom. 10. 10. It is faid of Christ that before Pontins Pilate, he witneffed a good confession. In this sense you read of it 70h. 9. 22. If any man did confest be mas Chrift, the Fews had made a law he should be put out of the Synagogues, and this is indeed the voice of the Spoule in the clefts of the Rocks, driven into cor-

ners

ners through the force and violence of a perfecution. This is a voice of the Spoule which Christ delireth to hear, Matt. 10. 32. Whosever therefore shall confess me before men, him also will I confess before my Father which is in Heaven. 1 Joh. 4. 15. Whosever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God. Let that therefore he a third particular for the explication of the Text. O my Dove I that art in the cless of the Rocks, in thy persecuted state and condition, let me hear thy voice, giving testimony to my truths and my ways, not denying my truths and Gos-

pel, but daring to own me in the face of mine enemies.

But, 4. There is the Spoules praying and praising voice : of this the most interpreters expound it, though they do not restrain it to it, Pfalm. 5. 3. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning. O Lord. in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and look up. Ad me in periculo confuge, me in tribulatione invoca, faith Mercer. Thy voice is sweet in prayer in the boule of the Sandnary faith the Caldee Paraphraft. Now the Spouse of Christ useth a threefold tone in prayer, confessing, supplicating, giving thanks, we comprehend them all under prayer. By these words (faith Mr. Ainsworth,) Christ sheweth ber own cause of ber Soul-troubles, that was ber own floth, and negligence in prayer, and other boly Duties; and also comforteth ber against ber fears and Soul-instrmities. The prayer of the Spoule at all times pleaseth Christ. The prayer of the upright is his delight, Prov. 15. v. 8. But the Prayers of the Spoule in a time of diffrels are particularly acceptable. Placet domino vox ecclefia in diffrimine ad illum confugientis (faith de Ponte upon the Text.) Hence, Pfal. 50. 15. Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt praise me, Jam. 5.13. Is any man afflicted, let bim pray; hence God is fet out in Scripture, as it were imitating a tender Mother, loving to hear the voice of the Child, and hiding herself on purpose, to make the Child call after her, Hof. 5. 15. I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledg their offences, and feek my face, in their affliction they will feek me early. I told you the Spoule uleth a threefold tone or language in prayer, every one of them is defired by her beloved. The first is confession of fin. I will return (faith God in the Text now quoted out of Hofes) to my place, until they acknowledg their offences. The confession and acknowledgment of fin you know is often required of God in Scripture, Jer. 3. 13. Only acknowledg thy transgression; you also find it frequently practiced, Fer. 14. 20. Pfal. 32.5. 51.3. many promifes

Pfal. 28, 2,

promifes made to it: This is a doleful voice, but a voice which God defires to hear. The fecond voice of the Spoufe in Praper, is her begging voice, by which the craves things needful for herfelf or others, for her Soul or Body. I shall not multiply words here, there is none who knows not, how often the Lord calls to us in Scripture for this, and by how many promises he hath incouraged us thus to fpeak unto him. He hath faid unto us, feek my face; Ask and you hall have ; feek, and you hall find; knock, and it hall be opened unto you, She hath also another tone in prayer, and that is giving thanks for mercies received, and praising God: I will deliver thee and thou shalt praise me, Pfal. 50. 15. you read of the voice of thanksgiving, Pfal. 26. 7. That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving; and tell of all thy mondrous works. Thus far now I have opened to you, and also proved the first branch of the Proposition. That the Lord Christ defireth to bear his Sponses voice, the voice of every honest heart, every believing Soul, whether speaking of and for him; in the profession, publick owning and acknowledgment of his truth, or confessing him before men; or to him, confessing her fins, begging of him things needful for herself or others; or finging, or speaking his praise. But it is further added in the Text; and I added it in the Doctrine.

That the Lord accounteth the voice of his Spouse sweet.

Thy voice (faith he) is sweet. That is, acceptable unto me, I delight in them; according to that, Mal. 3. 4. Then shall the offerings of Judah and Hierusalem be pleasant to the Lord, Is. 56.7. Their Sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine Altar. This accepting of fervices performed to God, is expressed under the old Law, under the phrase of smelling a sweet savour; which the Apostle followeth, 2 Cor. 2. 15. and Epbel. 5. 2. The wife man faith, the Prayer of the apright is his delight. But how hard a thing is this to an awakened finful Soul to believe? A carnal heart thinks God will be pleased with any thing, any lip-labour, any formal Hypocritical service. On the other side the awakened Soul finds a difficulty, to perswade it self that God can be pleased with any service which it can perform. It will therefore be necessary that I should for the further confirmation of your Faith in this momentous business; shew you upon what grounds, the voice of the Spoule is sweet unto Chrift, yea and neceffarily must be so; if we consider the uttering of this her voice.

I. As an act of obedience to the divine will. Hath the Lord (faith Samuel to Saul) as much pleasure in Sacrifice as in Obedi- 1 Sam. 15.20 ence of bis will to obey is better than Sacrifice. Obedience is in all things an acceptable thing to God, and hence we shall find God contemning those Services which himself instituted, when not performed as he commanded; for it was not the Sacrifice but the Obedience in it which God looked at. A man must have very low thoughts of God, that can think, that any act which man did as an homage to God, should be pleasing to him upon the account of the worth or dignity of the thing. Look upon the Fewish Sacrifices of old; they brought a Heiter or a Lamb, or a Turtle-Dove, or a young Pigeon; what worth, what dignity could be in these things, part of these were burnt upon the Altar. God speaks of smelling a sweet savour from them; from what? from the beast or part burned, that fent out a stench; the sweet favour was from the obedience, which in this Act the Fews shewed to the will of God. God requireth of us, to let him hear our voice, in all those senses I have shewed; he tells us our voice is sweet : Whence ariseth the sweetness, from our Souls Obedience to the revealed will of God? Hence by the way we may observe, that no homage we pay to God, in which there is no Obedience, can possibly be acceptable to him; we must be able to answer that Question. Who bath required this at your hands? This well digefted may confirm our Faith, as to this, that the voice of the Spoule is sweet to Christ; because it is that which he hath required at our hands, it is the Obedience of bis will: And by the way it is of wonderful use to satisfy a Christian, discouraged at his reflection upon the imperfection of his performances; Or upon the viewing of the perfection of God, and his glory and excellency; and the poverty and nothingness, of what he hath done. When a Christian is thinking with himself, Ah! what a poor shattered prayer have I now made! what a pitiful fervice this is for fuch a glorious God as I ferve! I fay this should wonderfully fatisfy him: Ah, but I have done the will of God; I have done as he hath bidden me, therefore he will accept it. Suppose a poor man had brought under the Temish state, a pair of Turtle-Doves, and two young Pigeons, and in the fincerity of his or her heart offered them to God; had he, or the, think you any reafon to have gone home and fate down discouraged; and faid, Ah! what a pittiful offering have I offered, others have offered, Bullocks, Goats, Rams, what is my Turtle-Dove? might not they A22 2

they rather have faid, nay, what a pittiful offering is a Bullock for God, if the thing be lookt at? but he that offereth his Bullock did what God commanded, so I have done, therefore it shall be accep-

ted. But Secondly,

2. The voice of the Spoule must needs be sweet to Christ, becaufe diclated by bis Spirit. Her voice in confession is dictated by his Spirit; Christ commanded his Disciples when they should be brought before men for his names fake to take no thought before-hand what to fay, for it should be given them in that Hour what to fpeak, v. 20. For it is not you that freak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. It is not you that speak, that is, you are not the Original and Foundation of what is spoken; you are but the instruments, the Organs of speech are yours; but it is the Spirit that influenceth you. And as this is true concerning the voice of the Spoule confessing for Christ: So it is as true concerning her voice professing his truth; for what are the Churches Systems of found Doctrine, but a collection of Doctrines out of Scripture. which indeed was written by men, but by Divine Inspiration? but particularly is it true concerning the Spoufes voice in prayer, to which the Apostle gives so ample a testimony in that Rom. 8. that nothing need be added, v. 15. You have received the Spirit of Adoption, by which you cry Abba Father, v. 26. we know not what to pray for, nor how to pray for it as me ought, but the Spirit belpetb our infirmities. Now the voice of the Spirit cannot but be sweet unto Christ whose Spirit he is.

3. Thirdly, The Spoules voice is not only formed and dictated by the holy Spirit of God, but it is also affiled by the Spirit of God. The Spirit (faith the Apostle) believed our instrmities; not only our instrmity in this point, that we know not what to pray for; but in this also, that we cannot pray for it as we ought: it helps us with Faith, with fervency, with strong cries and groans which cannot be intered. The Spirit helpeth us by an efficacy of Operation. Now the voice of the Spirit must needs be swert to Christ; for, saith the Apostle, ver. 27. He that searcheth the heart, knoweth the mind of the Spirit. And ver. 27. It maketh intercession for the Saints according to the will of God. So likewise in the Spoules consessing for Christ, there is a great assistance of the Spirit of Christ. It is said of holy Stephen in his Consession, Asis 6. 10. They were not able to resist

the wisdom of the Spirit by which be spake.

4. Fourthly, The voice of the Spoule must necessarily be sweet

unto.

Matt. 10. 19,

unto Christ, because it is terminated in bis glory. The Lord loveth himself necessarily. His glory was his first end of all his actions; be made all things for bimfelf, and he cannot but be pleafed in any thing by which his own honour is promoved. Now all thefe voices of the Spoule before-mentioned bring honour, much honour and glory to God; God is honoured by the profession of his Truth, by the propagation of the knowledg of him to Congregations, to Families, &c. And this is evident to any one that will but confider that man no otherwise glorifieth God, than by freaking of his glory, by commending him to others, (for to the effential glory of God we can add nothing:) For the Spoules voice admonishing and reproving fin in men, this also terminateth in the glory of God highly as it is a means to suppress and hinder sinin the World, the only thing by which God is dishonoured in the World. For her voice in confession of him before men, this eminently tends to Gods honour; and fo her voice in Prayer, Whofo confesseth fins giveth glory to God. My Son (faith Fosuab) confess and give glory to God. Her petitions speak him the author and fountain of every good and perfed gift, and many other ways too large here to recite. And for Praife, be that offereth praise glorifieth me.

5. But lastly, Would you know the true reason why the voice of the Spouse is sweet unto Christ; it is because of that infinite love wherewith he loves her. Our voice is a lisping, stuttering, imperfect voice: But as the very lisping and stammering of the child, are sweet to the Mother, not as the voice of an Orator, but as the voice of the child she dearly loveth, which she is forced to help it out with before she can well understand it; so is the voice of the believing Soul sweet to Christ, because the voice of his child. As the voice of the Woman or Virgin whom a man loves is sweet unto him, though she lisps or stammereth, or cannot speak so handsomly as another Woman, because she is his Wife, his Spouse; so the voice of the believing Soul is sweet to Christ, because his

Spouse, because he delighteth in her.

I come now to the Application, which I will dispatch in five I Ufer.

particulars.

In the first place, This offers us another advantage to stand still and have our Souls rapt into an holy Extaly, admiring the freemess of the love and grace in Jesus Christ; Les me hear thy voice!

Me

Me hear ? I that am continually hearing thousands and ten thoufands of glorious Angels never stained with the guilt of fin; that am continually hearing thousands of glorified Saints, singing Hallelujahs unto him that fits on the Throne ; I that need not either their voices or thine. Bleffed Lord! what love is this for thee to lend an ear to the clefts of the Rocks, to the holes of the flairs, to the cottages of Sinners? what is this for thee to come and liften at our Closet-doors? My voice! Lord, what Musick can my voice make in thy ears! My voice hath been used to idle words, filthy speeches, words of impatience and unbelief; wilt thou hear my voice, the language of that tongue that hath so dishonoured thee? My voice! Lord! my voice is but the melancholy mourning of a Turtle, the chattering of a Crane: my voice, take it at best is but a fluttering, stammering voice, a lisping imperfect voice; and doth the Lord fay, Let me hear thy voice? But what is this further that my Lord faith, For thy voice is fineet. Bleffed Lord! thy ears are not as the ears of man furely; thy judgment not as mans judgment; I cannot judg my voice sweet, I cannot repeat my Prayer in my thoughts, but I could even fink down upon the repetition, to confider how I have lifped out my fins, flammered out my petitions, spoken short, and clipt off thy praises. Man, finful man! fometimes hears me, and learned men too: They mock me, and call my voice canting and non-fense, and long-winded-devotion, &c. How doth my Lord call this voice freet ?. Oh! 'tis love, nothing but love; Love makes spots Beauty. Love calleth every thing good from the Object Beloved. O my Soul, be thou swallowed up in the meditation of this Love, in this infinite Condescension.

2. Uje.

In the second place, What an Armour of proof is this against the Temptation Christians have to restrain Prayer from the Almighty, from the second piers of prosane and sinsul men in the times we live! I question whether there was ever any Age of the World, in which the spirit of Supplication was more plentifully poured out upon Ministers or People: or wherein it was more blasphemed by wicked and ungodly men. A praying-people is made a jeer, and a nick-name; and Praying is called canting, talking non-sence, &c. The Lord lay not this sin to their charge. Christicalls this voice sweet, they call it bawling, non-sence, &c. But Christians, what matter is it what they think of it? It is not to

them you speak, but unto God; it is to his judgment you fland: what if rude people jeer the Woman because the lisps, or stammers a little, if her beloved calls her voice sweet, that's enough to her. Go on Christians, let them mock on; in this sense be you more vile in their eyes : That which grates in their ears makes Musick on the other fide of the flars. Chrift faith, thy voice is fweet ; But oh. You who have not made your foreheads as brafs, Take heed how you mock at the Prayers of honest hearts, take heed how you discourage Souls in offering up unto Christ; what he hath told you he delights in.

Thirdly, Observe, Christ will bear his Spouses voice. Hence one 3. Us.

or two things :

1. There is a Vocal Prayer, Christians duty. There are some in the Age wherein we live, who would restrain the duty of Prayer wholly to the inward man, and thence make no matter concerning words in Prayer, whether they be our own words, or the words of others; but Christ defires to hear our voice, as well as to fee the defires of our heart. There are calves of the lips, which are a Sacrifice God requires; There is an homage of vocal Prayer due to God, and whether this can be paid unto God, by recital of what is not conceived in our hearts, may be a question, as well as whether the reading of a Sermon made by another, be the preaching which God requires. However, as that inftructing a people by reading a Sermon is better than no instruction; and as it is the duty of him to lift up his heart to God, whose tongue is cut out that he cannot speak, so it may not only be lawful, but the duty of them who cannot first form a voice for God in their own hearts, to lift up their hearts, and fet others upon lifting up theirs to Go I by the help of others words. But whether this be a true fulfilling of this and other Precepts for Vocal Prayer, may be a queftion, though I shall not here concern my felf in it.

2. Secondly, If Christ himself will hear bis Spouses voice, what need we go fo far about as the Papifts, in speaking to the Virgin Mary ? to speak to her Son, no need of that Complement. Christ calls for your immediate Prayers, he will take your Petitions into his own hand. Suppose then that the glorified Saints knew our hearts (which is the incommunicable property of God;) Suppose they knew our state and mants, which the Prophet denieth, telling us, (Abraham knows us not, and Ifrael is ignorant of us.) Suppole II. 63, 16.

them in their glorious state elevated to an infinite capacity, to hear from Earth to Heaven, (which they are not,) yet it is but going about the bush, an unrequired Complement; when Christ hath said to us, Let me bear thy voice. 2. Nay, it is a finful and unlawful devotion. Most think that my Text is to be understood exclusively Let me bear thy voice; let me hear it and none else. Prayer is a divine Homage which can be given to God alone without ap-

parent Idolatry. But

Fourthly, Doth Christ desire to hear his Spouses' voice, and shall be not bear it? Let me here press upon you the homage of your lips: In the profession of his truth, in the communication of his knowledg to your Wives, and Children, and Servants, and Neighbours, your voice in reproving sin in others, your voice in confessing the truths of God before men when you are called thereto, Let Christ bear your voice in Prayer. Eliphaz the Temanite, Job 15. 4. charged Job, that he restrained prayer from the Almighty. There are two causes of restraining Prayer from the Almighty:

1. The first is security & carelesses: Professors are too too ready to let down their watch, and think a little duty enough for God: But Christians, do you hear him whom you own for your Beloved, calling to you, Let me bear thy voice, and will you restrain your voice from him? will he please himself to bear your voice, and will you not gratiste him with so poor an homage? If the Lord had asked you some great thing as your homage to him, ought not he to have had it that made you, that gave you your life, that hath given you all that you had, how much more when

he faith, let me bear thy voice?

a. But the second restrainer of Prayer, is discouragement. Many an honest Soul restrains Prayer from God, saying within himself, surely I shall pray in vain, God beareth not sinners, or God will not hear such broken shattered prayers as alone I am able to give him; To you I call by vertue of my Text not to restrain prayer from God. It is the Doves that are in the cless of the Rock possibly frighted thither by their own causeless terrors that our Lord speaketh hereto, saying, Let me bear thy voice; it is their voice which he here calls sweet; Let not therefore any Soul restrain prayer from God. O remember, it is a very great temptation upon a pious Soul, when Satan can so far prevail as to keep the Soul

from

from using its most effectual remedy for its Cure.

Lastly. Doeb Christ defire to beer our voice ? and doth be ac- Ufe. 5. count it freet? then furely we should much more defire to bear bis voice and count that freet. You would count her but an un? toward Wife, that should have an Husband fo in love with her, that he should love to hear her speak, and entreat her to let him hear her but speak, and in the mean time she should either by word or deed declare that the could not abide to hear him speak Christ speaks to us many ways: He speaks to you in his written Word, in his Word preached, in his Providences, by his Spirit: which way foever the Lord is about to speak, do you fay, speak Lord, for thy fervant beareth. Oh! let the Scriptures be sweet to you, let the spiritual Sermons be sweet to you; let the motions of his Spirit be sweet to you: Nay, beg that he would speak to you. The Lord here desires to hear your voice, Oh, defire you to hear Christs voice! When you go to read, or hear others read the Word of God; fay, Lord, let me bear thy voice in this portion of Scripture. When you are hearing Sermons fay, Lord! Let me hear thy voice in the Sermon. When you have some eminent dispensation of Providence, say, Lord, let me bear thy voice in this Providence. At all times fay, Lord, let me hear thy voice, the voice of thy Spirit convincing me of fin, reproving me for fin, directing me in thy Truth, calling me into thy Ways, quickening me unto Duty: I shall only press this upon you by minding you. That though Christ hearing your voice be no advantage to bim, yet your bearing bis voice is of bigbest advantage to you. A mans voice cannot be profitable unto God; for wherein can a man be profitable to his Maker; but do you hear his voice, and he hath promifed you, That your fouls (ball leve.

Take us the fours, the little foxes, for they spoil the Piner, and our Vines have tender Grapes.

VVE are come to the third Precept or Motion which our Lord maketh to his Spouse. Take us the force, &c.

For the full understanding of our Lord's meaning in which, we use enquire.

1. To whom this fpeech is directed:

2. What it is be faith: Where we must enquire, whom our Lord here intendeth, 1. By the Vines, 2. What he means by the tender Grapes, 3. Whom he means by Foxes and little Foxes, 4. What Taking our Lord here calls for. I shall invert my usual order, and first open these terms before I come to the Propositions of Dockine, which I shall raise and handle from the words.

It is our Lord that Speaketh (that is plain :) But 1. To whom

dotb be [peak?

Not to the Angels, though some have so interpreted it; they shall indeed have some employment of that nature hereaster, Mas. 13. 49. The Angels shall some forth, and sever the wicked from the

just: but this is not till the end of the World.

2. Unquestionably he speaketh to her whom he had before called his Dove, to his Spouse, by which we have all along understood the collective body of the Church, or the particular believing soul. There is a great variety amongst Interpreters: some thinking our Lord here speaks to the whole body of the Church; some, only to the Officers of the Church; Others to the Christian Magistrate. You know my manner to take Scriptures in the fullest latitude which the Analogy of other Scriptures will bear. I shall therefore understand it of the whole Church and every member thereof. When I come to shew you what is meant by the Foxes, and little Foxes, and the several ways of taking them for the Lord, you shall see we shall find a work for every Christian. Let us therefore consider what it is our Lord saith, Take us the Foxes, the little Foxes which spoil the Vines, &c.

We are first to enquire what are here meant by Vines, which will not be difficult if we consider, how often God makes use of the notion of a Vineyard, and a Vine to express his Church and people, Psalm 80. 14, & 15. you have both together: Bebold, and

Zu. 1.

vifit this Vine and the Vineyard which thy right-hand bath planted. apparently to be understood of the Church of the Jews. So in that famous Parable Efay 5, where God compareth Ifrael to a Vineyard on a fruitful bill. If the Church be the Vineyard, the members of it must be the Vines, (for they are the plants in this Vineyard.) Indeed Christ faith of himself, I am the true Vine, John 15. 1. But then Believers are compared to branches. If you confider the notion of the Vine, as a flock relating to branebes. So Christ is the Vine, he from whom they derive all their life, and the juice from which they live. If you confider a Vine as the adjunct of the Vineyard; fo the Believer is the Vine, he is the plant in the Church of Christ that brings forth fruit. Of this there is not much question.

This being determined, There can be as little diffoute concern- Qu. 2. ing the tender grapes of which the Text speaks: For as grapes are the fruits of the Vine, fo exercises of grace are the Believers fruits, called by the Apostle, Rom. 6. 22. the fruits of boliness unto life. And Gal. 5. 22. the fruit of the Spirit. The spoiling then of the tender grapes, or of the Vines while they have tender grapes, is the prejudicing of Christians in the exercises of holiness, while they

are yet imperfect in the exercises of it.

The 3d Question is, Who these are that thus spoil the vines while they Qu. 3. have tender grapes, represented under the notion of Foxes, little Foxes.

Here again Interpreters abound in their various fenfes. Bernard interprets it of Tentations, Corruptions, falle Teachers, and erroneous persons. Most interpret the term concerning falle Teachers, to which fome add Perfecutors. I am fure Herod (who was no false Teacher) is by our Lord called a Fox : Go tell that Fox, faith Chrift. I will not fall out with any Interpreters, but shall interpret it more generally of what soever it be, that (as the biting of the Fox spoileth the Vines.) fo by any means prejudice the fruit of boliness in the fouls of Christians. This general will, (when we come to handle that particular) as you will hear, bring in all their particulars.

The last Question is about Taking, what Taking the Lord means. I shall interpret this as largely as the other, concerning the use of all lawful ways or means, for the delivering of our felves from the mischiefs of any things or persons which may prejudice us as to our fruits of holiness. So then the general fense of this Text is, That it is the will of Chrift, that his Church the Officers and members therein should diligently, as well with respect to his glory as their own good, suppress, remove, or as much

Bbb 2

as they lawfully may obviate all persons, or things that may any way hinder or prejudice them in the exercise of their grace, and bringing forth the fruits of holinefs. But we shall observe several Propositions included in this General, and handle them in their order.

s. Prop. 2. Prop.

That every true Believer is and ought to be as a Vine, Christs Vine. That some of these Vines have tender grapes, of which the Lord Christ bath a care.

3. Prop.

That there are many Foxes, little Foxes : many things which are very prone to do mischief, to do burt to the Vines of Christ while they bave tender grapes.

4. Prop.

That it is the will of Christ, that his Spouse, as well for him as for themselves, should take these Foxes that spoil theVines when they have tender grapes.

I begin with the first of these at this time:

Believers are, and ought to be Chrifts Vines; Vines, Chrifts Vines: Why Vines? How; and why Christs Vines? These will be my two heads of Explication: I shall with it join the Confirmation under the several branches of Explication. You see whither my discourse leads me, viz to a shewing you the propriety of the me-

taphor, which I shall do in several particulars.

1. Of all the trees in the field the Vine bath least external Beauty, The Oak, and the Ash and other trees are very lovely trees, run up to great height, and look comely. The bark of fome trees, The foreading tops of other trees, are very lovely; but the Vine hath no fuch outward comeliness, all its excellency lies inward; its frem is a writhel'd ill-favoured thing, ordinarily more unlovely than any other plant; it spreadeth indeed, but to no loveliness at all: The Kings daughter also is glorious within. Look upon Believers in their external circumftances, they feldom have any beauty. Like thier Lord, they ordinarily grow like roots out of a dry ground, having no form nor comelines; hence when the World sees them, they can fee no beauty in them why they should be defired. In Christs time his Disciples you know were but poor Fishermen, John 7.48. The Scribes and Pharifees believed not on him, but an ignorant fort of people, as the Pharifees counted, a people that knew not the lam, and therefore were look'd upon by them as curfed. In Saint Paul's time, not many wife men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble were called. In Saint Jame's time, James, Chap. 3. verle 5. God bad chosen the poor of the world to be rich in faith, and beirs:

Cor. 1. 26.

beier of the Kingdom; yea, and ordinarily they are men of farrows, and acquainted wish griefes; the Sun of affliction and perfecution foorcheth them, their mothers children are angry with them; yet are they admirable plants, plants of righteouines; Vines planted by the hand of the Father, purchased and watered with the blood

of the Son; bedewed with the graces of the holy Spirit.

Secondly, The Vine is a feeble and dependant plant, it grows not as other plants, nor can stand alone, but is fastened to some wall, or (which was heretofore and is still in use, in other Countreys.) creeps up upon some Hedg or Tree, or some frame of wood; otherwise it would bring forth no fruit unto any perfection. Christ's Spouse is in this sense a Vine, a dependant greature; all its fruitfulness all their spreading dependeth upon another. Our Lord hinteth. this when he compareth himself to the Vine, believers to Branches Joh. 15. 5. mithout me you can do nothing; of our felves we cannot To much as think one good thought. Nay we are far more dependent upon Christ, than the Vine is upon the Wall or the Tree, or frame upon which it runs up; for though the Vine be fastened to these things, and uleth them as helps to strengthen it, yet it brings forth fruit from a flock of juice in it felf ; it doth not borrow its fructifying fap or juice from the Wall, or Tree, or Hedg, upon which it runs; but the case is otherwise betwixt our Souls and Christ, those habits of grace in us which produce gracious acts (which are our fruit) they are derived from Christ and infused by him, and first wrought in us, then assisted in us by his Spirit. We do not only depend upon Christ as an external help; but as to our internal principle, yea and as to that ability by which we produce our gracious habits into acts.

Thirdly, The Vine is a very diffusive and spreading plant, you see from how little a plant it grows to cover the whole tide of the house. The collective Sponse of Christ, the Church is such. After the ascension of Christ how little was its number, in 120 Souls in a corner of the world! In how short a time had it spread its branches over three parts of the world, insomuch that the Apostle applies the dissurements of the Sun and Moon, communicating their beams to the whole world, to the spreading of the Gospel, Roms 10, 18, their sound went unto all the Earth; and their words unto the end of the world. There is also a dissurements in every believing Soul, when Andrew was called, Job. 1. The he findesh Sismon and calleth him to see Christ, when Christ had sound Philiphe.

prefently

Jud. 9. 13:

prefently findeth Nathaniel. When Christ had discovered himself to the moman of Samaria. The discovereth him to all her Citizens but I will not dwell upon this.

Fourthly. The Vine is an exceeding fruitful plant; and the fruit of it is exceeding pleasant: Shall I faith the Vine in Fotbams parable) leave my Wine which chearesh God and man, and go to be promoted over the Trees, (that is Hyperbolically spoken : but we know that Wine cheareth the heart of man, and we also know that the Wine which proceedeth from these Vines, is acceptable unto God. Thou halt ravished my beart (faith Christ in this fong) with one of the chains about thy neck. Those chains were made up of pearls which were nothing elfe but Grapes from this Vine: believers are fruitful. Rom. 6. 22. You have your fruit unto Holiness, and let me tell you, they are not only more fruitful unto God than other men. unto God; but they are the only men and women in the world. who bring forth fruit unto God. Whereas all the fruit of our lives, are Natural, Moral and Spiritual actions, the latter only is fruit unto God; and that only groweth upon these Vines: you cannot gather Grapes of Thiftles, or Figs of Thorns, all (they alone excepted) are but Thiftles and Thorns; plants of nature never cultivated, corrupt Trees that cannot bring forth good fruit.

Fifthly, If they do not bring forth fruit, they are worfe than most other plants. Some other trees if they do not bring forth fruit, yet they are good for timber; but the Vine is a plant, whose excellency wholly lyeth in its fruitfulness, it will make no Timber; so as if it bringeth forth no fruit, it is good for nothing but to be cut down and cast into the fire. In this respect, I am sure professors, members of the Church, are Vines, they are either the best or the worst of men; if they be vites fruttifere, fruitful Vines, by the fides of the Lords house, they are the best men, the only persons from whom God hath honour; if they be not so they are the worst of men. none finneth against more light, nor more mercy, and ordinarily no mens fins bring more dishonour to God. It was the faving (as I remember) of an eminent late Pretcher in this Nation , If I would pick out a man to dishonour God, I would pick out a professor walking loofly. He is like a Vine, if he brings forth no fruit he is

the worst of Plants

6. I will inflance but in one thing more. Vines (you know) must be pruned that they may bring forth fruit. In this respect believers are Vince alfo. Our Lord directeth me to this, in that his

famous

farnous parable, Job. 15. 2. Every Branch that beareth fruis, be purgeth that it may bring forthmore fruit. God puneth or purgeth his people feveral ways, of which affliction is one. There are feveral kinds of afflictions. It is true of all, they are the Lords pruning-hooks, nor is the pruning-hook more necessary for the vine, than are offlictions, temptations, &c. necessary for the Child of God; the Souls of believers are subject to their luxuriances of luft and corruption, Plal. 119. 67. Before I was affilled I went aftray but now I have kept thy word, Affliction purgeth outour corruptions, this was it which the Lord told his people by the Prophet Haiab, If. 27. 9. By this foall the iniquity of facob be purged, and this all the fruit to take sway fin. Thus I have shewed you the fitness of the comparison, why they are likened unto Vines. but they are Christs Vines : Let me a little enlarge upon that, Our Vines faith Christ, and certainly our Lord may call them his by an excellent right which will be evident to us, if we confider but thefe four or five particulars.

1. That bis Father was be who planted them. The Pfalmift calls Mrael the vineyard which the Lords right hand had planted : fo fer-2. 11. I planted thee a noble Vine: fo If. 5. 2. The whole world is the Lords plantation, he hath made it, and whatfoever is therein; the Church is enexuein, as it were a spot of ground taken out of this great forrest; watered by a more particular dew from Heaven, planted with fome more choice plants, and hedged by a more particular providence; and all this done by the Lords hand, and this is emphatically true of believers, true believers. No man com-

eth unto the Son, but be pohom the father draws.

2. Chrift hath purchased them, and the Father bath given them to bim, Act. 20. 28. be bath purchased them with his own blood, I Cor. 6. 20. Hence the Apostle tells the Corintbians they were bought with a price, 2 Pet, 2. 1. and Apostates are charged with a denving the Lord that bought them, and the Father bath given them to him. All those whom thou baft given me, faith Chrift. They are his Vines by purchase and his by gift. His Father proffered the purchase to him, it was wrote in the volumn of his book that this Son should come and do his whole will, for the obtaining of this vineyard; he underwrote the book of his Fathers counsels with Lo I come, and the Father gave unto him, that the counsel of the Lord should profper in bis band, and that he should fee of the travel of bis Soul and be fatisfied; and that by bis Rigbsoonfness be foould justify mu-3. It ny.

is by faith in the Son of God, Gal. 2.20. It was written, Hab. 2, 4. The just shall live by Faith, and this life of Faith is the distinctive life of every time believer; and this Faith is the Faith of Christ, Rom. 3.22. By this they are justified, Rom. 5.1. and by this aboy are familified, Act. 26.18. by Faith aboy stand, 2 Cor. 1.24. and walk, 2 Cor. 5.7. He is the wallon which they lean, to which they are fastined.

4. It is he (Fourthly) that influenceth all their fruit; hence it is that he, John 5. compareth himself to the Vine, and them but to branches. As the branch cannot bring forth fruit; except it abideth in the Vine; no more can you except you abide in me. God told his people of old, that in him their fruit was found, and Christ hath told us, that without him we are able to do nothing. They live, but yet not they but Christ liveth in him. They can bring forth no fruit unless planted in him; they cannot continue bringing forth fruit, unless abiding and growing up in him; all their habits of grace, which are the principles of all their Spiritual operations, are from him.

5. It is he who presset out all their fruit. He doth not only give them the principles of all their Spiritual operations, but he assisted them, in their workings from those habits and Spiritual principles. I can do all things, saith Paul, through Christ that strengtheneth me. In a word he doth all their great works in them, and for them, as in him they have their Spiritual being, so

from him they have all their Spiritual life and motion.

6. Lastly, They are bis Vines, because all their fruit should be unto bim, I shall not need enlarge upon this. Who planteth a Vineyard (saith the Apostle) and eateth not of the fruit thereof, we may say? Who purchaseth a Vineyard, and hath not a right to the fruit thereof? who watereth, weedeth, hedgeth a Vineyard and expecteth not to taste of the fruit thereof? who affords a Wall to the Vine to spread upon, but looks to eat of its fruit? Thus you see that believers are in all senses imaginable Christs Vines; so as he may well call them our vines. I come now to the Application; which I shall dispatch in two things, inferring from hence, I. The difference between believers and others, and their dignity:

2. Their Duty more than others.

In the first place this letteth you see the difference between believers and other men, and the dignity of the believers state.

They are Vines; they are Christs Vines . They are Vines : you shall find the holy Ghoff in Scripture, comparing wicked men to many things among plants. They are compared to Briers and to Brombles, If. 10. 17. to corrups Figs, Jer. 24. 8: Grafs on bonfe-cope, Pfal. 27. 2. Oaks whose leaf tades, If. 1. 30. Tares chanking the Corn, Matt. 13, 38. Trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, Jude 14. but rarely to Vines. The nearest that comes to it is that which you find, Dent, 22. 23. Their Vine is ar the Vine of Sodom and of the fields of Gomorrab : Their Grapes ore Grapes of gall. and their clusters are bitter. I fav this fetteth out the dignity of the Church of God; and more especially those who are believers in truth they are Vines. They are vines. The Scripture every-where speaketh the excellency of a Child of God above another man. The Righteous man is better than his Neighbour; and better is a little that the Righteous man bath, than the treasures of many wicked. What the Scripture elsewhere afferteth positively, here it afferts by way of comparison. Sinners, wicked profane men, are no Vines. Amongst Trees you know fome bring forth no fruit at all & some bring forth naughty poisonous fruit : to it is amongst the men of the world. There are some of them that bring forth no fruit but poisonous noxious fruit, the fruit of lufts and corruptions; such are lewd and profane persons. What is their fruit, but the fruit of for to death, fruit nexious to themselves. poilonous to others? many of them are but Briars and Thorns. pricking Thorns to the house of Ifreel to the fincerer part of Chriflians; fome of these indeed are Ceders in Lebanon; tall in honours and preferments; some are Oaks of Balban, good for shadow, and of Some use in the world; but the believer only is the Vine, he is he only who bringeth forth fruit unto God. God hath indeed fome fervice for wicked men, he made Cyrus his Servant; But

1. This is not properly fruit; for as God faid of Affrio when he used him, If. 10. as the Rod of his anger. Howbeit be meaned not so; so it may be said, as to all that Service which the wicked of the earth do for God, their heart is not for God in what they do, they serve God just as an Hamk serveth the Faulconer. The Hawk preyeth for itself, only the Faulconer by his wisdom taming the Hawk and bringing it to his hand, takes advantage of its revenous nature, and makes it serve him, in taking prey for itself.

Secondly, They are the Children of God only that bring forth fruit acceptable and well-pleafing to God. Many Trees bring forth

2. V/e.

fruit; that is good too in its kind, but it is not mans meat: there are many men and women in the world, that bring forth fruit, that is in its kind good; but not well pleafing to God, because the perfons are not accepted: fuch are all the moral actions of men, the Tuflice of one, the liberality of another, they are fruit, they are things in themselves good; but not acceptable to God; materially, but not

formally and spiritually good.

3. The believers only bring forth fruit as the Vine, whose branches you know bring forth fruit, by vertue of that inice which they derive from the flock. I am the Vine, the true Vine (faith Chrift, 7ob. 15.) you are the branches. As the branch cannot bring forth fruit unless it abideth in the Vine; so no more can you except you abide in me. So that as the Vine is with relation to the Trees of the Wood; fo is the believer with reference to other

men; here is their difference, this is their dignity.

But Secondly, This notion doth not more speak the dignity than the duty of believers. It is their dignity, that they are Vines, Christs Vines. It is their duty to be Vines, generous Vines. The Pfalmist speaking of the Ifraelites, faith, thou hast brought a Vine out of Egypt, Pfal. 80. 8. Every true believer is a Vine brought out of Egypt. Every Church of Christ, is a Vine brought out of Egypt. The Church is a Vine brought out of the Egypt of Paganifm, the Egypt of Popery. Every true believer is a Vine, brought out of the Egypt of a natural condition, wherein it was a worse slave to Satan, to lufts and corruptions, than ever the men of Ifrael were to the King or Task-mafters of Egypt. Olet not God fay of the Church to which we relate, nor of any of our Souls, as he faid of the Ifraelites complaining, Fer. 2.21. I planted thee a noble Vine, wholly a right feed, how art thou then turned into the degenerate plant of a strange Vine unto me ! Let none of these Vines be as the Vines of Sodom, nor of the fields of Gomorrab; let none of your Grapes be Grapes of gall, let none of your clusters be bitter. Answer the nature of Vines in your lives.

1. Be you dependent Vines. The Vine is an infirm feeble plant, and therefore runs upon an house, or a Tree, or an Hedg. O live in a constant sense of your own weakness, in a constant dependancy upon the Lord Jesus Christ! this is that life of Faith, which is so frequently in Scripture commended to you: God hath prepared you a wall to lean to, a Tree to run upon. O learn to live upon God, learn to live upon Jefus Chrift. The Vine in its own strentgh,

firength, cannot run upward; and defend its own fruit. and its fruit roes if it lies upon the Earth and comes to nothing; without me, faith Christ, you can do nothing; in me, faith God, is your fruit found. Lye not upon the Earth, take heed of a carnal worldly conversation, all the fruit of holiness roes, when our Vines lye upon the ground: Bring forth your fruit in Christ. That Text, Joh. 15. Every branch in me, that bringesh not fouth fruit, is ent off and cast into the fire, may as well be translated, Every branch that bringeth not forth fruit in me: There is a fruit that may be

brought forth not in Christ; but that fruit is naught.

2. Be you Vines for fruitfulness. They say the Vine is of all plants the most fruitful plant; and its fruit is most pleasant fruit. Hence you shall observe in Scripture, that the fruitfulness of the Vine is much made use of, Pfal. 128. 3. Thy Wife shall be as a fruitful Vine by thy house-fide, If. 32. 12. They thall lament for the fruitful Vine. And Christ much presseth this in his parable of the Vine, Job. 15. God complained of Ifrael that the was an empty Vine. Hof. 10. 1. An empty Vine is almost a solecitme in nature. I told you in the explication, that were it not for the fruit of the Vine it were one of the worft of plants, Ezek. 15.1,2,3. Hear what the Lord Speaketh : Son of man, faith he, what is the Vinetree, more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the Forrest? shall wood be taken thereof to do any work, or will men take a pin of it to bang any veffel thereon? Bebold it is cost into the fire for fuel, the fire devoureth both the ends thereof; and the midst of it is burnt : Is it meet for any work ? Behold when it was whole, it was meet for no work. Separate a Christian from his fruits of Holines, and what is this Vine more than the other Trees of the Forrest? what's a Profesfor, what's a Christian more than another man, if he be not more holy, more humble, more meek, more charitable? nay, as I before told you, he is worse than others, as the Wood of the Vine is worfe than any other Wood, not fit for Timber, not fit for any work, not fit fo much as to make a Pin to hang a Veffel on. Ordinarily it falleth out that Christians are none of the great, none of the rich men, none of the wife politick men in the world; Tou know your calling (Brethren, faith the Apostle) not many wife, not many rich, not many noble. Many wicked men, though they bring forth no fruit unto God, yet do God forme fervice, though not intentionally, yet by accident as it were. They make a shadow for the oppressed, they are wife men and useful in great affairs Ccc 2

affairs of Government; but Christians, true believes generally, if they bring not forth this fruit unto God, are less valuable than many wicked men ; they are not useful as Politicians, they can make no great shadows, all their excellency lies in their holiness. Be you therefore like Vines, bringing forth fruit, much fruit, pleafant fruit, the fweet fruit of Righteoufnels. Job. 1 5.8. Herein is my Father glorified, ifyon bring forth much fruit, fo fall ye be my Difeiples. That verse affords Christians two arguments for their bringing forth much fruit. 1. This is the way to glorifie God; the more fruit of boliness you bring forth, the more you glorific God. This is your shewing forth the praises of him that hath called you; the fruitfulness of the plant turns to the credit of the Gardiner. 2. Thus shall you be Disciples; a Disciple hath his name either from learning of his Master, or from the following or imitating of his Master: what learn we from Christ, if we learn not to be Holy, and to abound in the fruits of Obedience? wherein do we imitate the Lord Jefus Christ if we be not Holy as he is Holy? This Text affords us another argument; You are Vines, Vines are plants that bring forth much fruit, you answer not your name if you be not fruitful; if you be not better than your Neighbours in point of Obedience, as well as you are better as to your state and priviledges: This Notion therefore may put you upon propounding that question to your selves, which Christ propoundeth to his Disciples; What do I doe more than others? The Vine brings forth more fruit than any other plants: what fruits of Obedience to the will of God, are feen more in my life than in the lives of others?

3. This Notion of a Vine prompts you to diffusiveness. No plant more spreadeth than the Vine doth, none runs surther and grows safter. It speaks to you, 1. For a growth in grace; you know it is the Apostles precept, Grow in Grace, and in the Knowledg of our Lord Jesus Christ. God hath promised that his people should grow like Cedars in Lebanon, and like the Calves in the stall. We do not understand the growth of the Cedar, because we have not those trees amongst us, but Calves grow a-pace, and Vines grow a-pace, this we know; and surely if we be Vines, we should grow like Vines. 2. And it calls to you for a diffusiveness of Grace; the Vine diffuseth it self upon whatsoever is next to it. Grace should be like the Oil on Adrens bead, which ran down to the skirts of his garmen.

Pfal. 92. 12.

Mal. 4. 2:

Laftly. And with that I shall conclude. It calls to you for patience under offiction, rejoicing in affliction, and an improvement of afflictions. I before hinted to you, that afflictions are Gods pruning hooks: the end of our pruning our Vines is, that they might bring forth more fruit, and experience telleth us, that if they be not pruned they will bring forth little or no fruit. This is Gods end. He purgeth them (faith Christ) that they may bring forth more fruit, we are chastifed for our good : and this may let us fee how afflictions, though they are fenfible forrows, yet are just causes of inward and spiritual joy, because by them we are purged; therefore judged that we might not be condemned with the world, but made partakers of his Holiness: and this also mindeth us to lay out our selves, in the improvement of our afflictions; you fee your Vines well pruned bring forth more fruit. Say to your Souls, the Lord pruned me last year, by taking away a dear relation, by a long or sharp Trial of affliction. I pruned my Vine, and I fee this year, that is the better for it, that is this year more loaden with fruit. God pruned me who am his Vine; am I any thing the better for it? what fruit am I more loaden with? Give me leave to tell you as the pruning of your Vines, either improves or killeth them; fo Gods prunings of you will iffue, either in life or death: you will be better or worfe, after Gods prunings.

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Cant. 2. 15.

Take us the Foxes, the little Fixes, for they spoil the Vines, and our Vines bave tender Grapes.

N my last Exercise, we sound the Vines here mentioned to be the plants in the Lords Vineyard, mentioned Esay 5. The men of Judah were of old called his pleasant plant, Esay 5.7. Every Believer is a plant which our heavenly Father bath planted, Matth. 15.13. We are now to enquire concerning the fruit of this plant that is grapes, and the difference of this fruit. Some have tender grapes: indeed all grapes have a tenderness, and are quickly battered and spoiled; the word in the Hebrew is 7700, it signifies Minuta: so Ar. Montanum, little grapes. Lexicographers tell us, it signifies Uvam primam qua flore decidente apparere incipit; norm immaturam, the first-come fruit after the slower falls off: hence some have translated it Flowers. The Doctrine I have to discourse upon, is,

That the Lord Christs Vines have some of them tender grapes; and of such the Lord hath a tender care. Here are two parts to be

fpoken to:

1. That fome of the Lords Vines have tender grapes. Our Vines have tender grapes.

2. That the Lord Christ bath a tender care of bis Vines, whiles they

bave tender grapes.

The Lord Christs Vines (some of them) have tender grapes.

All of them have grapes: there is none barren amongst them. A fruitless Vine of Christ is a Solecism in Divinity, John 15.2. Every braneh in me that bringeth not forth fruit, he taketh away. Grapes are the fruits of the Vine; Exercises of grace are the fruits of the Vine of Christ: Now these are more imperfect or more perfect. Hence you shall find in Scripture a distinction of Christians into such as are perfect, and such as are more imperfect; such as are meak, and such as are strong; such as have need of milk, and such as may have strong meat; lambs and sheep. John 21.15, 16,17. Christ biddeth Peter seed bis lambs, and feed his sheep. It was prophesical of Christ, IJ.40.11. That he should feed his stock like a shepbeard, he should gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his

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bosom, and gently lead them that are with young. Rom. 14.1. Him that it weak in the faith receive you. 1 Thest. 5.14. Support the weak. Rom. 15.1. We therefore that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak. Some are perfect (that must be understood comparatively,) 1 Cor. 2.6. Is peak wisdome among them that are perfect. Jam. 3. 2. Some are carnal, some are spiritual; some have attained, some have not attained. There is nothing in the Scripture clearer than this. Two things will be more worthy of our Enquiry.

1. To understand what these Vines are that have but tender grapes. How weak Christians stand distinguished from such as are

ftrong.

2. To know the reason of this difference of fize in Christians: whence it is that all Christians are not alike. Let me in the first place give you some marks to know weak Christians by, such as have but tender grapes. The weakness of all Christians, either re-

ferreth to their judgment, or to their practice.

1. The Christian that is weak in knowledg bath but a tender grape. Knowledg of the things of God is no diffinguishing gracious habit; the Devils know more than the best of us, many a knowing Soul goes down into the pit. He that knoweth his Masters will. and doth it not, shall be beaten with many fripes : but yet, no truly gracious Soul can be without it. That the Soul should be without knowledg is not good, faith Solomon, Prov. 19. 2. It is a necessary habit, and particularly to those who have means of understanding. If there be in Israel a people of no understanding : he who hath made them will have no mercy upon them, and be that formed them will them them no favour. What Arithmeticians fay of One, It is it felf no number, but it is the foundation of all numbers : So I think we may fay of Knowledg, in reference to diffinguishing grace; It is in it felf no diftinguishing grace, but it is the foundadation of all. How shall a man love, fear, truft in that God whom he knows not, what he is, nor how fit an object for these acts? How shall he obey that Law, which he understands not what it requireth? How shall he repent of bis fins, who knows not what fins, nor whether this or that action be a fin or no? How shall he perform his duty towards God and man, who knows not what is required in reference to the one or to the other? fo that he that is weak in knowledg, must necessarily be weak in grace. are some degrees of knowledg necessary to Salvation; but further degrees

degrees necessary to a strong exercise of grace. For suppose a willing mind in a Soul to perform every duty, to resist every sin a yet he cannot without a proportionable degree of knowledg produce this habit into act, in particulars she cannot mortiste that suft which he knows not to be sinful, nor do that duty which he understands to be a Duty: so that necessarily he that is meak in fairb, that is in knowledg of the Dollrine of Religion, is a tender grape.

2. Secondly, The Christian that is weak in Judgment, 16 but # tender grapes. I take both these to be comprehended under the term of Rom. 14. 1. Him that is weak in faith, receive you, There is a great deal of difference betwixt weakness in knowledg. (understanding by that ignorance) and weakness in Judgment. Judgment is an ability in us to discern of shings shat differ. The Apostle gives us a good description of a judicious Christian, Heb. 5. 14. One that bath bis fenfes exercifed to difeern both good and evil. I think the Apostle expresseth both these in that one Verse. Rom. 2. 18. And knowest bis will and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the Law, (fo we translate it.) The Aposile I take it is there speaking of Jews knowing, and judicious enough, but carried away with their bruitish and corrupt affections, and over-ruled by their fensitive appetite. In the Greek it is and produces to beame at found of the freehouse. which may be translated thus : Thou trieft or discernes the things that differ. Many Chafftians have been as the Apostle saith, there warn. xuperos in Ti rous, catechifed out of the Law, inftructed in the things of God; but either through a natural weakness, or through want of due exercise, they cannot make up a just judgment of things that differ, whether truth, or fallbood in reference to Propofitions : or good or bad, in reference to practice and action. And indeed there can be no other reason given (but the interests of lufts and pattions, which is uncharitably supposed of all :) why Christians of equal degrees of knowledg do not think, speak, and do the same things relating to God; now these Christians are tender grapes. As nothing more contributes to make a man in the World famous in any Science, in any profession, in any course of life, than judgment: So nothing more contributes to make a folid Christian than Judgment. And as a man may be a comely man. and a well-proportioned man, yet want strength in his limbs and nerves: So a Christian may have abundance of knowledg, and yet want a due and folid judgment, which is the very finews and ftrength of a Christian. 3. The

Who are weak Christians.

Thirdly, The more a Christian is under the obedience of his Sensitive appetite, the weaker he is. The Sensitive appetite, is that by which we defire fenfible things; Earthly things. You may take it shorter or plainlier, thus: The Self-pleafing Christian, the man that cannot deny himself, as to the things of this life, as to his own paffions or affections; that is a weak Christian. The Reason of this is plain. Our Lord makes it the great duty of his Disciples, to deny themselves. Now that man which cannot deny himself in the pleasures or profits of this life, or in the use of his own passions where he cannot use them without sinning against God, if he Ezech. 16.30 have any thing of a Christian in him, (which he cannot have without an habit of this Self-denial,) yet he is a weak Christian, and so much the weaker, as he more faileth in particular acts. Thus a weak Christian is one, who through a too great prevailing of the body of death in him, is not able either to perform the duty which he oweth to God, or to refift, and avoid those temptations which he ought to relift; yet not making this their trade and bufiness, but firring both unto the one and against the other. These Christians though they may be grapes, they are but tender grapes.

4. Lastly, That Christian that cannot submit the dictates of his own innate-reason to divine Revelation, both as to matters of faith and practice, is but a weak Christian, a Tender grape, We are not now discoursing of the strength of a man as a man, not of an ability either of body, or of mind, but of a strength of faith; the frength of a Christian as a Christian, which lies in his ability to trust a Divine Revelation to Submit himself to the will of God revealing what is to be by him believed, or done. We have all of us fome fragments of the Image of God, some innate principles of Reason, but as to spiritual things we are much blinded in our understandings. and are too too apt, in flead of taking it for granted; That the Will of God is the highest Reason; and therefore that it is the most reasonable thing in the World, that we should fully agree to what God in his Word hath revealed, whether our principles of Reafon will conclude it or no, to measure propositions of Faith by the line of our own Reason, and to judg of the truth or fallhood of them from our natural principles of Reason. Now indeed in this little of a Christian is seen, it being the proper work of Faith to teach the Soul to affent unto propositions upon the authority of him that revealeth them : and supposing that every pro-

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polition of divine Truth could be demonstrated to us immediately by principles of Reafon ; yet our taking them upon that evidence, were not Faith. But I have been large enough in this first thing, giving you the character and notes of weak Christians, tender graper : I come to the fecond.

2: To thew you the reason of this different fize and flature amonest Christians, I shall reduce all my discourse upon this to five or fix Heade to con the or a maken plout

1. The first shall be difference of time. All Christians are not of the fame standing in the ways of God. It is not to be expected that the grapes of those branches which have but newly cast their flowers, should be as ripe and forward as those that have had a longer time fince they first appeared: nor that a Scholar of two or three years standing, should be either fo full of Notions or to confirmed, and fettled in the truth of those Notions as he who hath been at his bufinels, feven, ten, twenty years. In natural things, Time gives perfection; In moral things, Time and practice give perfection. Now in spiritual things, both these must concur too: for though the Habit be supernatural, and infused, yet it is improved by Exercife. This is eminently true, as to weakness in knowledg, which is got by degrees, and in Judgment which comes, or at least is in great measure improved by practice and experience; yea, and as to that third fpecies of weakness too, the Sensitive apperite is not subdued and mortified in a moment; a Christian this month this year gets a victory over one luft, the next over another. In regard that Christ calls into his Vineyard, some at the ninth. fome at the eleventh hour; it is not to be expected those called in at the eleventh should be as strong as those that have been working all the day. Indeed, there is a great deal of difference here. fome much caused from the difference of Gods working on Souls: in some he makes his way from the bead to the beart. They have been well educated in the knowledg of the Scriptures, and the things of God there revealed, God in his own time quickneth this feed, reflects their knowledg upon their Conscience, and by advantage of it inflameth their affections. These Christians presently upon the change of their hearts appear more firong than others, but in others God makes his way to their beads by the beart : He first affects their hearts, makes them see their lost condition. the danger of fin, their need of Christ, &c. This done, they begin to enquire after God, and it must be some time before they can be perfectly

Menfons of the different flature of Christians.

perfectly infiructed in the way of God, and can come to a good judgment in the things of God. There are tender grapes, and muft

he le cill sime and industry harh ripened them.

2. A difference also of natural parts is a great cause of this difference in the fixe and flarare of Christians, every one knows that the Came sime will not make every child an Artift or a Scholar. Time and industry will do something confiderably with all, but not the fame thing. Some are naturally of meaher appreheafions. harder to conceive a thing, and of meaker judgments less able to determine things, and to differn and judg of things that differ; and as the thing evidenceth it felf in all persons bred but in the knowledg of Arts, Trades and Sciences; fo it is also true as to the things of God. God no more condescending to working Miracles ordinarily in that case than other cases: I take it to be true what one faith, Spiritus Dei operatur fecundum quod nolins eft Orgation, the Spirit of God working in gracious Souls, especially as to its gifts and endowments of knowledg and judgment, according to the natural capacity of the Soul in which he is pleased to work, So as the difference of natural Endowments is oft a great cause of

(piritual weakness.

Thirdly The difference of the means of grace which several Christians have is undoubted another cause of this different size. The Spirit of God worketh by means: The Apostia commandeth Christians to define the sincere milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby. Preaching is Gods Ordinance for the perfecting of the Saints. Some Christians live under great advantages: Blessed be God the Word is new to under great advantages: Blessed be God the Word is new to under great advantages: Blessed be God the Word is new to under great advantages: Blessed be God the Bible is in eyery house, but every one cannot read. That s. a great disadvantage, and almost now-a-days inexculable to Christians in our days when they may learn if they will. But suppose they can read, they cannot understand; some Christians have been bred up in Families and are in Families: where the Word is often read, they are often Catechifed and examined. (this is a great help.) It is no wonder if these Christians be fronger, Christians both in knowledg and judgment than other Christians are. So for more publick means, some Christians live in places where they can hear the Word of God preach'd plainly, powerfully, convincingly. Others live, where either they have no preaching, on whore the Preacher minds no such thing, as a faithful in functing of the Souls under his charge in the truths of God, opening the Scripton Ddd 2

tures to them, building them up in knowledg, faith and holines; but cants in a few high strains of boyish Rhetorick, or reads them over Ariftotles Ethicks in English, or yents his own bruitish paffions, &c. No wonder Christians, tied up to these tedders, and fed with fuch husks, beevery way weaker than other Christians.

4. A fourth cause of this different fize of Christians, is the Unequal distribution of divine Influences. The growth of the plant doth not only depend upon the time it hath had in the Garden. but also upon the Celeffial Influences. The moiffure of the Clouds. the heat of the Sun: thus it is with the plants also in the Lord's Vineyard; though they be generous plants, though they fland in a fat and fertile foil, yet if the heavenly Influence be with-held, they will be weak and languid. Now the Spirit is a free Agent, it breaths, it blows when and where, and how it lifteth. Though God will be wanting to never a Child of his in necessary influences sufficient to maintain its Union with him, yet he doth not distribute to affalike : he doth not alike enlighten, nor quicken. nor strengthen all, nor alike comfort all; and the strength of a Christian doth much depend upon the measures of these influences

upon his Soul

5. A fifth cause of this difference in Christians fature is the difference of their endeavours. Though we be paffive in the work of conversion. God is found of shofe that feek bim not and of them who enquire not after bim; yet God having once infused operandi principia, his gracious habits which are the principles of their ipinitual operations, they are active in their further progresses in holinels. Hence are those frequent Exhortations to firme after perfection, to wash and purishe our selves, so perfect believes in the fear of the Lord. Now in obedience to these Commands, some Christians are more diligent and industrious than others, taking more pains in the mortification of their lufts, and in the performance of their duties: and though these have still need of the strengthening and affishing grace of God, yet that co-operative grace being granted to them that put forth themselves in duty, rather than to those who are more secure, careless, and negligent; it is no wonder if these be fironger Christians, than those who are less watchful, less exercifing themselves unto godliness.

6. I will affign but one cause more of this inequality, and that Is the difference of divine differfations, as to the permitten of those things which will make binder Christians growth. When I coine to

handle the next Proposition from these words, I shall more fully thew you what these things are. It is sufficient now to tell you that there are fuch things: and through a divine permission some Christians meet with more of them than other Christians do. Some fall more into the hands of Seducers: Some fall into higher and longer Temptations: fome meet with greater & longer Affli-Ctions: all which things, as I shall more fully shew you in my following discourse, have often a very ill influence upon the profictency of Christians especially some way. But I have enlarged enough upon the first branch of the Proposition. The second follows.

That of thefe tender grapes, the Lord Christ bath a very tender care. I conclude this from the Precept: He commands his Spoule, faying. Take for us the Foxes, the little Foxes that Spoil the Vines, for our Vines bave tender grapes : indeed the Text affords us but one particular evidence of our Lords care for these tender grapes, but that is sufficient to raise the general Conclusion from. I shall take here an advantage, something more particularly to discourse our Lords tenderness to, and concerning weak Christians: 1. Shewing you this care in some particulars; 2. Giving you some reasons for it; which may further confirm you in the belief of it. 1. I will demonstrate it to you.

1: From what the Scripture revealeth concerning Christs perfonal acts in reference to fuch. 2 dly From his Precepts and charge to his Church, and to the Ministers thereof.

1. For the Lords perfonal ads

J. It was propheticd of him by Ifinab, Ch. 40. 11. He hall feed 2. Prop. bis flock like a hopberd; bo hall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young. The Church is there compared to a flock of Sheep : Christ. to the Shepherd, John 10. 1. I am the true Shepherd. Now, what Cattel are they that are the weaklings of the flock but the lamb? They are weak through want of age to encrease their bones, and. firengthen their limbs. 2. The Ewe that are with young : they have age, but yet are weak by reason of the burthen they carry : Now what faith the Text, He will gather the lambs with his arm, be will carry them in his bosom; and for those that are with young, be Shall gently lead them. Take another Text, Efay 42. 4. A bruifed reed he feall not break, a forwaking flax be fool not quench. That this is spoken of Christ appearath by Maush 172 2011 where it is applied to him. A bruifed reed is work reed a finesking flax is

flax

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flax to which fire is newly put a and hath not got fuch a firength as to break out into a flame. Now this is faid of Ohith ff it be zeed, though a bruifed reed Christ will not bredt to if R'be Her & though the fire of Divine love and grace be but newly still to le. and it doth not yet flame out; yet he will not quent wo Thus it was prophecied of Christ before he came into the world Let us take a view of him, when come into the world. He reads his committee on I'vis the first Text we read he took Land 4: 18.) taken but of Maiah 61. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me bresiefe be buth . anointed me to preach the Goffel to the poor be bath fent me to beal the broken-bearted to preach deliverance to the Captibes, and recovering of fight to the blind, to fet them at Liberty that are bruifed. Who are the broken-hearted, who are the Caprives? but the tender Grapes which the Text foeaks of? Christ interpreteth his Undian and commission you fee, with a frecial reference unto thefe. Let us come to our Lords practice.

1. How tenderly from time to time, doth he instruct those, whom he calls men of little Faith, Matt. 6.30. Matt. 8.26. & 16.

8. When he spake to others in Parables, he expounds unto them the Parable, telling them that to them was given to know the

the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.

2. What care doth he take not to discourage them by too bard duties? Matt. 9. 17. Mar. 2. 22. he would not put new wine into old Bottles.

3. How careful is be that none family offend or burt them? declaring that it were better for a man that a Mitton were blung about his neck, and he cast into the bostom of the Sea Matt. 18.6.

4. When any of his Disciples showed themselves week, Oh'l how gently doth he lend them his hand to help them. When Philip discovered his weakness, saying, Joh. 14. 8. show her the Father and it suffices has: mark our Lords answer, v.o. Have I been so long with you, and yet host thom not known me Philips he that both feels me hath seen the Father. When Peter thewed his weakness by crying out, Master save me, I perss, Christ lent him his band and pulled him into the ship. When he had discovered a surther weakness by denying his Master, though he gave him leave to go out and to weep hitterly; yet helooks upon him kindly, and sent him word he should meet him in Gastiles. When I bomothad discovered his weakness; saying, he would not believe energy he might thrist him weakness; saying, he would not believe energy he might thrist bin

band into his fide, and lay bis Fingers in the print of the nailes Christ Johnon 25,28. within eight days calls to him; faying, reach hither the Finger, and behold my bands, and reach bither thy band, and thruft it into my fide. and be not faithlese, but believing. When he saw all his Disciples troubled, (and trouble always argues some weakness) he Preache eth to them that excellent Sermon, Job. 14, 15, 16. Ch. Let nos your bearts be tranbled you believe in God believe alfa in me.

5. Let me yet instance in one thing more, it is that which you have recorded, Mar. 4. 33. with many fuch Parables as they been able to bear it. A Text which looketh dreadfully upon a great many fantaftiek vain Preachers in our Age. As too many mix their Sermons with fuch evomitions of there lufts and pations, as no lober ears are able to bear; to there are many that fcorn to. humble their Rhethorical tongues, and Philosophical dialects tothe capacity of poor Christians: in stead of Preaching as Christians are able to bear (after the example of their Lord) they either Preach fo (if it may be called Preaching) as no Christian is able to bear; or at best so, that Christians of mean knowledg, weak judgments, are not able to bear it. Christ did otherwise, he humbled his preaching to Christians capacity; he thought it no dishonour to him to Preach as people were able to bear. He could (no doubtof it) have delivered his mind, in as high ranting language, as some think it their glory now to do it; he could have delivered them as deep philosophical speculations; yea, and doubted less would, but that he did not think clay and spittle a proper means to cure blind mens eyes, though once (for a Miracle) he fo thewed his Divine Power; nor Bread baked with mone dung good ordinary food, although he once for a figo commanded Exekiel fo to take his: But in this I fay he shewed a tender case of weak Christians; he taught shem, as they were able to been it.

We have hitherto feen our Lords personal practice, and although this were and ought, to have been judged enough for hisd Ministers and Churches, to direct them what they ought to dos yet our Lord hath not left here, but as a further demonstration of his care of and tenderness towards them lest shrough the pride and pallion of, men (for Elijaha are men, lubject to like pathonso with other men:) he hath left a charge with his Ministers and Churches to deal tenderly with them, This & shall evidence in w

five or fix particulars.

He hach commanded bis Churches to receive them, Rom. 14.1. Him that is weak in the Faith receive you; doubtlefs the Apostle is there speaking of the Doctrine of Faith, and he that is weak in the Faith (in the sense of that Text) is he that is weak in knowlede or flaggering, and not sufficiently confirmed in the truth; concerning thefe the great Apostles precept is, that we should receive them. Only let me mind you here, that there are two degrees of a Churches receiving. There is her receiving of a member as a Catechumenus, to be further instructed in the way of God. Thus every Church of Christ is bound to receive the weakest in the Faith, as Aquila and Prifeilla received Apollos to teach him the way of God more perfectly. 2. There is a receiving to a full communion, in all Ordinances. As to this it is possible that a Christian may be fo weak in the Faith, that as yet he ought not to be received. For the Apostle tells us he must be able to differn the Lords Body. 2. he must be able to examine bimself; and even in that Text follows-but not to doubtful disputations, of which more now.

2. He hath commanded his Church not to receive the weak in the Faith, to doubtful disputations; not to trouble their head with questions, which signify nothing in the great business of mans Salvation. Christ would have his Disciples grow in knowledg, and as they grow to perfection, they may examine matters of doubt, and compare Scripture with Scripture: 'tis a piece of their duty, in order to the convincing of erroneous persons striving for the saith, stopping the mouths of gain-sayers, but out of tenderness to weaker Christians, he hath commanded his

Church not to admit them to these disputes.

Thirdly, He hath commanded his Church not to grieve nor effend them, not to lay a stumbling-block before them, 1 Cor. 10.32. give none offence in any thing, 1 Cor. 8.13. Rom. 14.21. I intend not to discourse the extent of those precepts; only in short; 1. There is an offence of anger, when my Brother is made angry by my action. 2. Of grief, when he is grieved and troubled for my action. 3. Of stumbling, when by my action he is made weak, Rom. 14.21. that is, made to sin, when as the Apostle elsewhere speaks, I by my action destroy him for whom Christ died. I ought to take heed of making my Brother angry, or to grieve him where I can avoid it, but above all to take heed that I do nothing which shall be a tempration to sin. Thus you see what care Christ takes of weak Christians by this precept.

4. He hath required of his people to Sympathize with them, to bear their barthens. Bear you one anothers barthens and so fulfil the law of Christ, Gal. 6.2. weep with them that weep, Rom. 12. 15. accordingly doth Saint Paul, 12Cor. 11. 29. Who is offended and I. burn not? This is another thing which speaketh our Lords tender care of those that are his tender Grapes.

5. He hath charged his Ministers and people to belp them; to strengthen the weak hands, and the feeble kneer; hence those frequent precepts in Scripture given both to Ministers and people, to admonish one another; to comfort, to support, to establish one another, to exhort one another; they are so many throughout the epistles especially, that I need not give particular instances.

Sixthly, He hath commanded us: If our Brother be overtaken with a fault, to restore him in the Spirit of meekness, Gal. 6. 1. Those that are weak are most subject to fall, not through wilfulness wallowing in the mire, but through weakness and want of strength. Now our Lord hath commanded, that if any should so fall, those who are Spiritual, those who have more strength, should restore him; but how? like good Chyrurgeons (who they say must have Ladies hands) tenderly not in pride, not in passion; not triumphing over them, but in the Spirit of meekness. Thus I have now shewed you the tender care the Lord Jesus hath of his tender Grapes of weak Christians.

7. Lastly, He hath commanded us to bear the infirmities of the weak, Rom. 15. v. 1. We therefore that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selves: Christ bath compassion on our infirmities, and is touched with the feeling of them, Heb. 4. 15. and he looks we should do by others as he does by us, the infirmities of men are ordinarily bottomed upon their passions. As to these Christ would have us bear with them, that cannot so well rule them. But this is enough to demonstrate the Proposition.

Now because this is a point of no small importance, let me shew you some foundations of it, to increase your faith in God as to this thing; and it will appear but reasonable to you, if you please to consider.

r. That the tender Grapes are Grapes, the weak Children are Children. The Fathers interest in the Child, lies not in the strength of it, and the proportion of its limbs, but in his relation

God hath receiwed bim.

to it; the Substance of a Christian, is as much in a weak as in a fronger Christian, she root of the matter is in the weekest Christian as well as the ftrongeft. The feed of God is as much in him, as in any other. The weakest believer's born of God, united to Christ, a branch in him; we say in Logick, that more or less doth not very she Species. The Child is as much mankind, as the grown man. God loves, and cannot but love, the work of his own hands, as it is the work of his own hands; and that every true Christian is as much a believen, whether fironger or weaker; if there be in him aliquid Christi, any thing of Christ, any thing of Faith, though it

be but as a grain of muftard-feed.

Secondly, Christ knows that the tender Grapes will ripen in due time, Rom. 14. 1. He shall be holden up, for God is able to make bim fland; you that are Parents are tender of your youngest and weakest Children; you know, that these Children (if they live) will be men one day (Supposing Gods ordinary providence) and then they will do you as much fervice, and may bring you as much credit, as their elder and better proportioned Brethren. The Bord knows this of every weak Christian, and he knows it better than we can know it of our Children, because as he is able to make fuch stand, so he hath resolved, they shall be bolden up. It is true God is not moved from any thing in us to any act of grace , we are not profitable to him. But yet this is reason enough to confirm us in the Lords care of tender Christians, for why should not our Lord be tender of them, who one day shall be as serviceable unto him, as our felves are? and if they be not the only reason is because he gives them not alike influences with us.

3. Laftly. Is not this after the manner of men? doth not nature itself teach the indulgent Mother, and the tender Father to take care of the youngest and weakest? God amongst our Children hath so cared for little ones, to provide for them against the disadvantage, which in respect of their years they have of their elder brethren and fifters, and shall he do not so amongst his own Children; let me a little turn the words of our Saviour, and fay, If we who are evil know how to provide for our Children and families, fo as to take the tenderest care over the youngest and weakest Children. least able to defend themselves, shall not our heavenly Father do to much more? But I shall insist no longer upon the Doctrinal part, I come to the Application; and shall begin with something

of Instruction.

In the fift place, What you have heard will inform you, that 1. Use. there are more weak brillians in the Church of Christ than the world is smare of weakness may either respect knowledg (as to the Dockrine of Faith,) there is a weakness in Judgment (as to an ability in discerning of things that differ, which is the best of two Motions, that are laid before us, or of two ways of practice.) There is a weakness of affeltions, where the sensitive appetite more prevails, and there is a weakness of affeltions, where the sensitive appetite more prevails, and there is a weakness of Faith; we ordinarily account none weak, but with respect to the former, but that is a mistake: you see a Christian may have his head full enough of Spiritual knowledg and yet be weak. Hence observe,

Secondly, That it is a possible thing, that a Christian may be 2. Branch. strong in one respect, yet week in another. As a Child may be strong as to some parts, yet weak as to others; so may a Child of God. A Christian may have strong affections, a great love for God, a great Zeal, servent defires, and yet may have a week knowledg and judgment; and on the other side a Christian may have great knowledg, and a good judgment in Spiritual things, and yet weak affections; his sensitive appetite, his affections and passions

may too much prevail upon him.

Thirdly, What you have heard may inform you, That is is 3. Branch. possible that Christians may not only be a long time weak; but at mays meak, and that incurably. We have this day a great deal of flir about our duty in reference to tender confeiences, to wook Chriftians. It is a confessed duty that those who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak; but fay their adversaries, will you be almans meak ! have you not had so many years to be informed ? my Brethren, let us but underfland what weaknefs it is we are speaking of certainly it is a meakness of Judgment, we are speaking of, serving to direct our practice; for before a Christian can do this or that, he must needs in his conscience judg that the thing is lawful for him to do: now suppose that it be lawful, yet if he hath not a just ability to judg of things that differ, he cannot judg the thing is lawful though indeed it be fo. Now I fay as to all this time will not always cure it, no not with the use of utmost means. Many Christians through a weakness of natural parts are never never able thus to difeern things that differ. Nay I doubt, when ther any liveth, and thus finneth not against God. I mean in some Propositions of truth or other judging amis; and accordingly directing his practice, which should call for a mutual forbearance Ece 2

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each of other: Let bim that is guiltles throw the first stone. The mischief is, that those who are uppermost in secular advantages will always count themselves strongest, and those who are under, must be called the weak: whether the first be the strong ones or no, must be lest to Gods judgment; but admit they be, it is their duty to tear the instruments of the weak. But to pass this branch of Application.

Secondly, This Doctrine affordeth a wonderful relief to poor Christians; and that upon a double account. 1. They may be Christs Vines though they have but tender Grapes. 2. That Christ will take a tender care of those his Vines, which have but tender Grapes. Thus

it relieveth the fincere Christians.

First, Against discouragements from bimself, a fincere Christian hath no severer Judg than himself; reflecting upon his own ways, and feeing the imperfections of them, he reflects upon his knowledg, and finds that weak, upon his duties, and finds them imperfect; and possibly short of many others: he cannot pray as others pray, &c. this makes him judg and condemn himself, as if he had no part, no interest in the Lord Jesus Christ; but be of good chear Christian; all the Children of God are not of a fize; God hath in his flock, some sheep, some Lambs; in his Family, some Children, some grown ones. His Church is like an Orange-tree, which hath always upon it some ripe, some green fruit. His Vine hath some ripe, some greener Grapes. If thou hast Grapes, though they be but tender Grapes, though thy exercises of Grace be not so perfect as others, yet thou haft an interest in Christ, a relation to him. If the root of the matter be in thee; if thou beeft a plant of Righteousness, though thy stature be not so tall, though thy fruit be not so fair as anothers, yet God will accept thee.

2. It relieveth us against the discouragements we may have from the flights and contempt of others; you use to say the weakest goes to the wall; and it is too often so, in Spiritual things; he that is strong scorns and slighteth the weak. The knowing man triumpheth over him that is weak in Faith, and he who thinks he stands triumpheth over him whom he judgeth fallen; so cross are we to the commands of Christ, that instead of bearing one anothers burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ; instead of bearing the insirmities of the weak, and not pleasing our selves, men are ready to add to their Brethrens burdens and lay more load upon them; yea if the best of us examine our hearts, we shall find too much of this corruption in us; men do not take that care of the Lords little ones which

they

they ought to do; weak Christians may often complain with the Spouse, My mathers Children were angry with me, and this cannot but be a great discouragement to a gracious and honest heart. But here's a relief: Christ bath a render care of thee, if the Father loves and tenderly cares for the little one, it may the better bear the slights and contempts of its Brethren or Sisters. I hear some Christians saying, If I were sure my fruits were but Grapes, though but render Grapes; but I doubt whether my fruit be Grapes or no? would I pursue this, it would lead me into an enquiry, by what notes, the moral actions of natural men may be diftinguished from the Spiritual actions of men that are regenerate and born again, but I must not run out too far in this discourse in thort.

1. Grapes you know are the fruit of the Vine. We are Christs Viner; as we bear fruit to his glory, Christ (as I before hinted to you) is our Vine, as we bringforth fruit in and by him, he affording us his gracious influences, Job. 15. I remember that when Peter hade made that noble confession of his Faith, which you have Matt. 16. 16. Chrift made that reply, v. 17. Bleffed are thou Simon Bar . Jona Flesh and blood bath not revealed this unto thee. but my Father which is in Heaven; and indeed, there is no frukt we can bring forth unto God, that we can take any comfort in, but that must be said of it. It must be such, as flest and blood cannot enable any to produce; you know every plant hath its specifical fruit. It is no Grape which another plant can bring forth as well as the Vine. Mofes never appeared to be the fervant of the most high God till he came to do something the Magicians could not do. That question of our Saviour then was a pertinent question. What do you more than others? for verily a Christian must find that he doth fomething more than others, before ever he can fatisfy himfelf in this weighty thing. But you will fay, how shall I find a bottom here? Another may pray, hear Sermons, read the word, come to Sacraments, another may be just, temperate, liberal; I will tell thee Christian . All is brought to one word and that is Love ! If thou canft fay, that the Soul loverb God. That's more than all ! the Hypocrites, all the formalists, all the natural men in the world can do. By this abide if thou canft fay, Lord, thou that knowest all things knowest that I love thee. I cannot pray, I cannot fast as much as another; but Lord I love thee, the defire of my heart is toward thee, the delight of my Soul is in thee, I hate what thou hatesh. This: Initification come and from the Vind. Other Christians may arisibly bring forth larger and fairer fruit, but if this he wanting his rotten at the Core. The Grape you know is a little herry, but none sweeter. There are larger and bigger fruits, but none more pleasant than the Grape. And methinks (Christians,) if you would but duly weigh this, you need not be at a loss at any time to try your truth of grace. Certainly, a man may know as to the satisfaction of his own Soul, Whether he lover Christ yea or no, as well as whether he loves his Friend yea or no? and I tell core to be judged from gifts, but gracion influences: not from performances but from Love. Find this, and you hall find all. But I come to the last tile which I chiefly intended; that is an tile of Exhortation, which will look two ways:

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1. Upon you that are ftrong, or at least judg your selves so.

2. Upon you who are, or at least judg your felves week.

1. Let me first apply my self to you who are strong, or at least judg your selves so: (though let me tell you, it is no very great exidence of a strong Christian to judg himself so.) That which I have to speak to you for, is to look to your selves, as to your behaviour towards them that are weak.

In the first place, Take beed of condemning your Bretbren for meer meabness. It may be Christs Vine though it hath but tender grapes. There be a great many very erroneous ways of judging concerning Christians: We look upon Christians as Samuel looked upon the sons of Irsee, upon their constraints, and the beight of

their ft ature.

1. Of some we judg by their parts and performances: They have great knowledg, they are able to speak to God in Prayer more suently than others, and to men in the things of God more coplously than others: we presently say the anciented of the Lord is before us; perhaps it is but an Eliab whom the Lord hath rejected.

2. Of some we judg by their considences: They arrogate to themselves more than belong to them, and have the considence to say with Jebu. Come up into my Chariot, and see my zeal for the Lord of Hosts; and we think their heart is at their tongues-ends, when it may be they are but Jebues got into a Charlot of ambition, and driving surjously to some self-end of their own, and that is their journeys-end. But observe what I said to you before (Brethren)

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and you shall not ers. That Soul that loves God is unquestionably horn of God. View the whole of a man or a womans conversations, where you fee a Soul breathing after God upon all occasions fo far as they are able, expressing their love to God in Duties, Ordinances in Reading, Hearing, in an hatred of fin, and pursuing Righteousnels, inloving, delighting in, doing good to the fervants of God. There's a Christian, there's one hath the root of the matter in bim: though he or the may be weak in knowledg, and weak in judgment, yea, though he or the in particular acts may have their failings, and they may possibly not yet have got a full vi-Gory over some lusts or corruptions, that were their iniquities either from their natural temper, or an ill-habit or custome contra-Ged in the days of their ignorance. Take heed of judging Chriflians for weakness; God, faith the Apostle, hath received them.

2. Secondly, See you perform your duty to them; what that Duty is. I shewed you in the Doctrinal part. You may find some of them weak in knowledg and judgment, trouble not their heads with questions, with doubtful disputations. You may find a Christian that like the Martyr cannot diffrute for Christ, but yet can die for Christ; and you may possibly see and admire others that can dispute for Christ and cannot die for Christ. You may possibly find a Christian weak in judgment, and who through weakness and diftruft to his own judgment, though he flumbles at a thing, vet may do it feeing you do it before him; do not lay a flumbling. block before bim; you know this is the Apostle's Precept, and I conceive must have these two limitations:

1. The thing must be in its own nature indifferent, otherwise we have no liberty.

2. It must be in things relating to the worship of God.

I fav first it must be in things in their own nature indifferent ; I must do my duty let who will be offended, but Charity commands me to forbear my liberty. I must not venture my own Soul to fave anothers; but I ought to webture my own humour, or pleafure, or profit, or conveniency in fuch a case, or certainly I do not walk charitably.

Some would firetch this limitation in their telling us, That it must be in things indifferent where me are not determined to one pant; by the command of our Superiours : But I cannot yield that because it is more than I know, if the Superiour be excepted out of the law of Charity. He doubtless long he not to lay a flumbling-block

before

before weak Christians any more than any private person; and therefore such commands are in things not under the command of

Superiours.

Secondly, I think it must be restrained or chiefly limited to matters relating to Gods worship. I am sure concerning such it is that the Apostle speaks: if we do not thus limit it, we may take away all that natural liberty in things which God hath given us.

But to proceed,

You may find a Christian, that through weakness is fallen into a fault, it is your duty to reftore him in the spirit of meekness. You may find one that hath not yet got a conquest over his passions, and upon that account full of infirmities, it is your duty to bear with them; strengthen him what you can, but do not make him more weak. You may find fuch a one burthen'd with the fense of fin, with croffes and trials : weep with them that weep, Bear one another's burthens : Oh confider, 1. Thus you shall fulfil the Law of Chrift, Gal. 6. 3. 2. Thus you shall imitate your great Lord and Master; he carries the Lambs in bis bosom. And then, 3. You also may be made weak. A great sickness will make a strong man weak you know; A great Temptation will make a firong Christian weak, confidering thy felf lest thou also be tempted, which is the Apostles argument Gol. 6. 1. annexed to that piece of our Duty in this, which lieth in the reftoring of a lapfed Brother. It may be those words have two arguments in them : 1. as they affert a possibility for the very best to be tempted, 2. as they may signify, that the superciliousness and ill-carriage of stronger Christians may provoke God to let them fall into temptation, that they may learn to pity, help and deal gently with the tempted. You know the Scripture faith, That Christ also suffered being tempted, that be might be able to succour them that are tempted. Indeed, we never hardly learn our duty to them that are weak, till we have been our felves made weak.

2. Branch:

But I shall add one word to the weak alfo.

1. Hath Christ such a tender care of you? O then, (though you be otherwise weak) yet be not weak in your love to bim! doth he carry you in his arms? do you carry him and his glory in your hearts? The love of our Parents to us when we were Infants, their care at that time over us should never be forgotten by us. Commonly we see it amongst our Children, they love us better when they are little weaklings and must be carried in our arms,

and

and brought up betwixt our knees than when they are grown. It should not be thus with Gods children, and the rather because while they live they will never be able to shift for themselves, but will stumble and fall, and perish if thrown off Gods hand. This should be argument enough to enslame your love to Christ, to consider the tender care he hath of you: but let me further add.

2. The all that you can do for Christ; you can love him if you will, but what can you do more? Others can discourse of the Law and love of God, and do him service by informing, instructing, pleading with others; by speaking of the Law of God when they lie down, when they rise up, when they go out, and when they come in: you cannot do this, you are week in knowledg. Others can dispute for Christ, vindicate his truths from his Enemies: You are week in judgment, you cannot dispute for Christ; what can you do worthy of so great a name as that of a Christian? you can do nothing but love him, you can pant and breath after him, you can delight your self in the Lord; you can prize him, his Law, his Love, his Truth, his Ordinances, above ten thousands of gold and filver; You can delight in communion with him, and rejoice when any faith unto you, Come, lit us go up to the bouse of the Lord;

3. Give me leave to tell you, That of all weaknesses contingent to Christians, weakness in love is the worst and most inexcusable, as a strength in love is of all frength the most desirable and valuable. A vigour and strength in love to God is ten thousand times more valuable than a ftrength in knowledg, or a foundness of judgment; indeed they are chiefly valuable in reference to this. When light in the head produceth heat in the heart, then it is a bleffed light, but else it fignifieth little; fo that a weakness in love is the worlt of weakness, yea and most inexcusable. A Christians weakness in judgment may be excused from a want of natural parts; his weaknels in knowledg may be excusable from his want of parts, want of time, want of fuch means and advantages as others have : but what canft thou fay, why thou shouldst not love the Lord Jefus with all thy heart, all thy foul, and all thy firength? Oh, be not weak in love; if you be weak in faith, yet be not you weak in , But other weakness are, love.

2. Secondly, Hath Christ fuch a tender care of his little ones at

that brings me to the last thing I shall speak.

Wherein lies the duty of a weak Christian to himself, in conside-

ration of the tender care which the Lord Christ hath of him?

Let me answer this in particulars:

1. It is gertainly his duty to walk bumbly. This is indeed the duty of every Christian, be he weak or strong; they that are highminded constantly fall into the temptations of the Devil, Micah 6. 8. Hear O man what is good, and what God requireth of thee---To walk bumbly with thy God. It is a Precept to all, Be you cleathed with bumility: The Apostle gives us a sufficient reason for it, asking us. What we have that we have not received? but certainly it more eminently concerneth the weak Christian to be so. Christians failing in this, is one of the great mischiefs in the Church of Christ. Their forgetting that admirable Precept of the Apostle. Rom. 12. 2. I fay, (through the grace given unto me) to every one that is among ft you, that no man think of himself above what be ought to think; Oh that we could but live up to this Rule! Christians weak in knowledg will think themselves strong, and men weak in judgment, will judg themselves to have more judgment than any others; hence all our Animolities and foolish passions, for quarrels ordinarily are not between Abraham and Lot but between the berdimen relating to them both: certainly Humility doth wonderfully become a weak Christian, and must naturally follow from any Christians confession of his weakness.

2. It is the unquestionable duty of the meak Christian, to do what in him lies to grow strong, 2 Pet. 3. 18. But grow in grace, and in the knowledg of our Lord and Saviour Jesu Christ, to him be

glory both now and for ever.

I told you before, that there is a Species of weakness, that in some degree, and in some Christians is incurable, that was a weakness of Judgment, proceeding either from a want of natural parts, or from that great variety of Christians apprehensions concerning Propositions of truth, which sheweth all but madmen a necessity of sorbearance with Brethren of different judgments in the things of God; for none gives it to another, but if he were well examined would be sound himself to need it. But other weaknesses are curable: he that is meak in knowledg may grow in that, by reading, hearing, meditating.

1 Cor.4.10.

ditating, fpiritual conference, Oc. He that is weak in Love, weak in regard of the prevailing of his fenfitive appetite above the law of his mind, he may grow in grace, he may grow in love, and will do affoon as he can but morrifie his members, and keep his body in subjection: in thort, affoon as he can but accustom himfelf to the use of that means which God hath prescribed in order thereunto. He that is weak in faith may grow in that, and will do affoon as he can but perfuade himself that it is the highest reason in the World we should believe what God faith. without the light of our own innate reason to clear it to us.

Now this is certainly the duty of weak Christians to labour to be firong, they have a good fight to fight, they had need of firength in their arms: they have a long Race to run, they had need of strength in their legs: they have hard and difficult work to do, they had not need be feeble : Chrift hath a tender care of them, and the end of this his care is that they might grow, they will never answer this love and care of their great Lord and Master unless they do co-operate, and work together with him in order to that bleffed end; and as a piece of their duty in order to their growth they are to take the Foxes, the little Foxes. There are such persons and things, and it is their duty to Take them; but to describe these to them, and to open and limit their and others duty as to the taking of them, must be the work of my two next Exercifes if God pleafe.

13) I sa daum apff 200 fiede I do e dail w Cant. 2.

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Cant. 2. 15.

Take us the foxes, the little foxes; for they Spoil the Vines, and our Vines bave tender Grapes,

I Concluded the last day with an Exhortation to the weak, to grow in grace and in the knowledg of the Lord Jesus. Christs tender care of them should, (I told you) oblige them to some care of themselves. In order to this growth reason tells us, 1. The hinderances must (as much as lies in us) be avoided. 2. The furtherances of it attended. Under the first Head falls the taking of the Foxes, the little Foxes : I am now to direct you in this Chase ; Two propolitions yet of the four first mentioned remain:

1. That Believers are Vines, Christs Vines, you have heard; That Some of these Vines have but tender grapes, you have beard : You are yet to hear, 1. That there are Foxes, little Foxes which will spoil these Vines, those especially of them which have tender grace. 2. That it is a piece of Duty which the Spoufes owe to Christ, as well as to themselves to take these Foxes, these little Foxes. I chuse rather to join both these together, (though I make two Discourses) because the Application will belong to the latter: Take them therefore both united in this one Proposition.

That it is a piece of duty which the Church, and the particular Soul ows aswell to her Lord as to herfelf, to take the Foxes, the little Fexes, which |poil the Vines ; and more especially when they have tender grapes.

This Proposition, I. Supposeth that there are Foxes, little Foxes which foil the Vines when they have tender grapes. Secondly, It afferts, That thefe are to be taken, and that as well pro Domino Rege ac pro fe. It will therefore run me into a very wide field of Dif-

course, which yet I shall contract as much as I can.

1. To an enquiry what are those Foxes, those little Foxes, those things or persons, that ex sua natura vel malitia, either from their own nature, or from their malice, hinder Christans growth and proficiency in grace; (for I rather chose so to interpret the term Foxes, little Foxes, than as some do restraining it as to this or that kind of persons or things, as well to reconcile Interpreters upon this Text, as because I think the Holy Ghost hath a more

3. Prop.

general

general fense in these words, than particular Interpreters general-

ly have fixed upon.

2. To an enquiry how thefe may be taken; for there may be an irregular taking of these Foxes, these little Foxes: and wherein the duty of the Spouse of Christ; (whether by it we understand Magistrates, or Ministers, or private Christians:) lies as to the taking of them.

3. To demonstrate that this is their duty , (Tam Domino Regi quam fibi) as well upon their Lords interest, as their own : Take

for us the Foxes, the little Foxes.

4. When I shall have done this, I shall come to the practical Ap. plication of the whole. I shall begin with the first of these.

You know I chose rather to interpret the Text generally, of all those means by which the work of grace is hindred as to particular Souls, than (as fome interpret it) of this or that particular mean by which such work is hindered in particular Souls. For as thus I shall reconcile all Interpreters, so I think I shall better hint the fense of the boly Ghoft. For the Foxes, the little Foxes, are here mentioned more for the general malignity of their natures to the Vines, in spoiling them, and that particularly when they have tender grapes, than in respect to any particular quality of these Foxes: we will therefore first Enquire,

What are those things, or persons, which are prejudicial unto the fouls of Christians as to their growth and progress in grace; and especially to such of them in whom Gods work is yet more imperfed,

who have but tender grapes?

I think I may well enough reduce them to four Heads: 1. Inward corruptions, 2. Forrein Temptations, 3. False Teachers and Seducers: and 4. Perfecution. All thefe are Foxes, old, or little Foxes, which spoil the Vines, and then especially when these Vines

have the most tender grapes. I begin with the first:

1. Those I call Inward corruptions, are those which the Apostle calls नरीम बंगाधीबा, Vile offections, नर्दिका नर न्यायां . The deeds of the body. Rom. 8.13. Our members which are upon the earth, Col. 3.5. Ta winn ini The wis: deceitful lufts, Eph. 4. 22. The lufts of the flesh, Rom. 13. 14. More plainly, they are the motions of our Sensitive appetite con- Rom. 1. 16. trary to the will of God. There is as a spiritual good which so Rom, 1. 12. presents itself to our better part; so a Sensitive good which lieth in Col. 3. 5. pleasures, profits, bonours, and our Sensual part thirsteth after thefe. These Luftings are as to the work of God within us Foxes, little Foxes,

Poxes, and spoil the work of grace in the Soul; so far they all partake of the more general nature of Foxes. There is also in fome of them, fomething of the peculiar craft and fubrilty of the Fox , therefore Bernard (in one of his Sermons upon this Tetx) expounds it of peccata que in fe virtutes mentiuntur; Such lufts as have in them a colour or appearance of Duty and gracious alls; be they what they will, if they be lufts, I am fure they are Foxes as to their general malignity to what of God is in any Soul. If they have presences of duty, and yet be but lufts, they are more Foxes. Thus felf-feeking is a Fox, pretending the honour and glory of God, this Fox Spiled Febr, in his fetting out for the service of God; had this Fox been first taken, he had both done God and himself more service than he did by his furious march against the house of Abab; this spoils Zeal, it spoils our alms, our prayers, indeed all our acts of grace; which are distinguished from moral actions, as by other things, fo by nothing more, than the fincerity of our intention, and directing them to the glory of God as their end. Covetonfness, (which is our irregular lusting after riches,) is a Fox, it spoileth our doing good and distributing to the necessities of the Saints (the Sacrifice with which God is so well pleased :) yea it spoileth all duties; it is true in Spiritual things, avaru nibit rede facit. Self-pleasing and love of pleasures is a Fox, it spoileth felf-denial, suffering for the name of God, bringing our body into fubiection; and it doth it like a Fox, sometimes under the fair pretence of a free use of the creature: in short, there is no corruption but is a Fox. Our least lusts are but little Foxes, which spoil our fruits of Righteousness, and especially while they are tender. Those little flies make our Boxes of Ointment to flink.

2. Temptations are Foxes. Thus Bernard in his second Sermon on my Text; Vulpes sunt temptationes, all tempters are Foxes. The Devil is the old Fox; men his instruments are little Foxes; whosever tempteth [that is soliciteth another to Sin] is a Fox, he destroyeth or doeth what in him lieth, to destroy the work of God in his Soul; and the subtilty of the Fox is in this seen, that in all temptations, in all drawing away of the Soul from God, there is some inticement, Jam. 1. a man is then tempted (faith the Apossele) when he is drawn away and enticed; all temptations either prevail upon the Soul, or do not prevail. If they do prevail, they pollute the Soul, and hinder the fruits of Righteousness, and bring

forth

forth the fruits of fin and wickedness; if they do not prevail, yet at least they trouble the Soul, hinder its Faith, peace, joy in the holy Ghost, and so one way or other spoil the tender Grapes;

thele are another species of Foxes: then,

2. A Third fort of Foxes are perfecutors. Christ hath given this generation their name, Luk, 13. 32. Go tell that Fax, behold I cast out Devils to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfeded. A Perfecutor is one who makes another to fuffer, for his Conscience towards God. That these men spoil the Vines, needeth no words to demonstrate: These cut up the Vines by the root. How many Vines have these Anthropographing men-caters] destroyed? eating up the flesh of the Lords people like Bled? How many more have they discouraged and made afraid of the paths of purity and holiness, because of the snares, which in those paths they had fet for them. These are the Churches Cannibals, the great enemies to the Lords Vineyard, the wild Boars of the Wood, and the wild Beafts of the Forrest which devour it. And they are Foxes too. They have subtilty as well as malignity; They appeared heretofore like Lions, proclaiming their fin as Sodom, rending and tearing in their own names: But they have fince learned, I. To helter themselves under the protection of Laws. We have a law, faid the fews, and by that law be ought to die. So that none shall suffer now for his conscience towards God, but for his disobedience to the laws of the state. This is but a Fig-leaf to cover their nakedness : Paul pursued Christians by a law, yet he persecuted the Church of Christ (as he confesseth, I Cor. 15. 9; I Tim. 1. 13.) furely Chrift was perfecuted, yet he died by a lam which they had made. 2. Their courses likewise of late, not to make fo many Bonefires with Martyrs bones is but the trick of a Fox. These made too great a noise, they will now do the same thing by their inquisitions, their pining them in prisons, &c. they do not tear (as formerly) like Lions, but they get the blood still like Foxes: but I shall to this add no more.

Lastly, false Teachers are Foxes. All interpreters almost agree in this, and interpret the Text, chiefly in reference to them. I mean those who instill any Doctrine into people destructive to holines, holines, the fruits of holines are the tender Grapes which are here mentioned, and they are Doctrines which tend to the abatement and destruction of holiness which spoil the Vines. It is not every difference of another in opinion from me, that makes

him

Qu. 2.

him more a Fox to me, than I am unto him; but whofoever bringeth in any Doctrine which hindereth faith and bolines. That's a Fox, a Fox that spoileth the Grapes; his malignity to the husbandmans profit from the Vineyard, viz. The glory of God, and his spoiling the Grapes, is a sufficient evidence. Delrio makes the Calvinifts almost the only Foxes, and he would say much to prove it, if he could prove what he faith in that place that Calvin's Doctrine is quedam invitatio ad omnem conflugem omnium libidinum, proftibulum lutini. Sacritegarum nuptiarum conciliatrix lenocinium; but Jesuites are better at reviling than at proving: the later Arminians agree with them in the same tune. But they talk little while they argue against demonstration evident to all. Let any one look at the general conversations of Popish Priests. and people of Arminians, &c. and those who follow that Doctrine which Mr. Calvin believed, and they will by the effect eafily judg whose Doctrine, Calvins or theirs leads to most strictness and holiness of life. In the mean time we will most freely agree the general with them, that fuch Teachers, whose Doctrine leads to take off men from believing, what the word of God hath obliged men to believe in order to Salvation, or from an holy life and conversation, be they lesser or greater, are the Foxes, some of those Foxes which spoil the Vines and that when they have tender Grapes, and therefore ought by all lawful means to be suppressed and taken as well for the honour and fervice of the Lord our Mafter as for our felves: we have now found out the Foxes; the next thing to be enquired upon, is the will of the Lord in this word Take.

How is the Church of Christ, or the Spouse of Christ, to take thefe

Foxes, thefe little Foxes ?

I before told you more generally, that I took the term to be comprehensive of all just and lawful means warranted by the word of God, for the suppressing and restraining these Foxes, and for hindering their mischievous effects upon the Church of God, or the Souls of believers. My answer to this will be different with respect to the several kinds of these Foxes: The Foxes that are within our bosoms must be taken by mortification. The tempters (which were the second species) must be taken, both by mortification of those lusts which are ready to entertain the impressions of them; and by putting on the whole armour of God by resistance, fighting the good sight. Persecutors are taken by Faith, patience, pray-

er, falfe teachers, by convittions, arguments, &c. Thus you fee this question presently divideth it felf into four.

Wherein lies the duty of a Christian, as to the taking of those Fox- 1. Qu.

es which lye within him, his lusts and corruptions?

1. The Fox must be found before be be taken, a great bufiness of a Christian lieth here, in the unkennelling, and discovering of his corruptions; for though every reflection upon our own hearts will shew us lust and corruption enough in them, yet every Chri-Rian hath his idian embuular, his proper lust which he doth not so easily discern, and that which makes him most blind as to it, is that particular kindness which he hath for it. This is therefore the first business of a Christian to search what lust, what corruption that is, which doth most hinder his Soul in the exercise. In one it is Pride, in another Covetonfiness, or the immoderate love of mony and gain, in a third love of pleafures, something of sensuality; in a fourth, paffion or rath anger, a too much quickness of Spirit, in refenting of an injury. Every one, if they look narrowly, may find fomething which they may after David call mine iniquity; the unkennelling of this Fox, the discovery of this special impediment of the fruits of Righteousness in thy or my particular Soul, is the first thing to be done.

Secondly, The mortification of such lusts, must be pursued by proper means; you know every Dog will not run down a Fox, no not every Hound. The Fox must be pursued with Fox-dogs: several lusts have several means proper to the mortification. There are indeed some Catholick remedies, such as fasting, prayer, setching of strength from the death of Christ; but there are also some specifick remedies, suited to the nature of the Spiritual distemper; Proper meditations to be used, proper promises to be applied, proper courses as to our conversation to be observed. You cannot expect that I should discourse of these particularly, as the lusts are various, so the meditations sitted to the mortification of them, the promises proportioned to our Faith in God, for a deliverance from them, things to be avoided or done in order to it, have a great variety and cannot be narrowed into an hours discourse. This therefore shall be enough to have spoken generally in solution of the sist.

Question: The second Question is,

What a Christian should do in order to the taking of the second fort of 2. Qu. Foxes, which I told you spoiled the Vines. 1. viz. Temptati-

These Foxes are then taken, when they do not take. A Sollicitation to fin fignifies nothing of hurt to the tempted, unless it

prevaileth. To prevent which,

1. As before, the first thing to be done is to diferen is. The Christian that hath not (to use the great Apostles expression) his senses exercised to discern good and evil, will never know how to tight, resist and conquer his enemy: If we do not know that it is evil, to which we are solicited, we shall never make any resi-

stance to it. But this is plain.

Secondly, Nothing can be more effectual in order to this than the mortification of that luft, which the temptation is fuited to. This is certain, that every temptation is proportioned to some special luft; and if we difcern the temptation, it is an easy matter to difcern that luft in our Souls to which it is suited. As now supposea Christian hath a temptation upon him to steal or cheat; The luft in our hearts now, which if it be not the author yet it is of party to this temptation must be an unbelief or distrust in the promises of God for a supply of the good things of this life, or else a too much love of money or the things of this life: mortify this diffrust. this love of the things of the world, and you take this Fox. Christ faith of himself, Fob. 14. 30. The Prince of this world comes, and be findeth nothing in me . I shall only allude to it : The Devil is called the God of this world, the Prince of the power of the Air, he cometh to tempt; but if he can find nothing in the Soul, he can do nothing against the Soul. They say that witches (those miserable Souls that alive have given up themselves up to the Devil can do no hurt to any till they have got something of theirs, that it seems is one of the laws of that black Society: how universally true that is I cannot tell; but I am fure the Devil their Father can do nothing against a Soul if he find nothing in them, if he falls not in with some lusts in their hearts, making tinder for his Sparks; he strikes fire in vain and this was the case as to Christ. Matt. 4.

Eph. 6.11.14.

3. The third thing to be done, is, Fighting the good fight, putting on the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil; then standing, resisting stedsast in the Faith, I Pet. 5.9. This again is too large a general for me to open in the several branches; you have the several pieces of this armour described, Eph. 6. the girdle of truth, the brestplate of Righteousness, the Shield of Faith, the Helmet of Salvation, the Sword of the Spi-

mind you as to the Sword of Spirit, which the Aposse hath determined to be the word of God: there are some special portions of the word of God, both in the precepts and promises, and threatnings of God, which God hath lest usas a special armour, and that both offensive, and desensive against some special temptations, which it will be the great prudence of a Christian in the hour of his temptation to search for, and to hold up: you know thus Christ took the old Fox, Mass. 4. he constantly replied upon him, it is written, it is written, and urged him with some apposite Scripture, requiring duty opposite to the sin for which the temptation is levelled.

4. When you have done this, you have nothing to do but to fast and pray. That is, to call in the help of him who was therefore tempted, that he might be able to succour those that are tempted. I proceed to the third Question.

What should a Christian do in order to the taking of the third fort of 3. Qu.

Foxes, Perfecutors ?

Perfecutors are taken truly taken, when their bearts are changed and of Sauls they become Pauls. Give me leave to tell you this is a rare work, of all forts of finners, I am apt to think that in the Kingdom of Heaven another day, there will be found the fewest of those who were Persecutors on earth; but however this is Gods work in whose hand the Persecutors heart is as well as any other mans. Perfecutors are also taken when they are cut off, and thus they are very ordinarily taken by the remarkable hand of God, written ebildlefs, cut off as God hath faid blood-thirfly men thould be before they have lived balf their days. But this is also Gods work, and doth not often fall under the Magistrates power. I have only to discourse to you concerning your duty, as to the taking of them. Three or four things you may do, and give me leave to tell you those things well done, will quickly rid any portion of the Lords ground of these Foxes, and hath cleared several Churches from one age to another.

1. The first is a bold and meek cansession of the truths of Christ, for which you are pursued. I say, 1. bold in opposition to sear, and, 2. meek in opposition to passion. When I mention boldness, I understand not impudent, and irreverent behaviour to Superiours; but boldness in the faith, or boldness in the confession, as it is said, 1 Job. 20. he confessed and denied not. Thus it is said of

Ggg 2

Christ,

Christ, that he before Pilate witnessed a good confession. There is a boldness of impadence, which Paul was ignorantly guilty of, when he called the High Priest a whited mall, for which you know he cried him mercy, teaching us (though Persecuted) to give

Honour to whom Honour belongs.

2. There is a boldness also of indiscretion, not using those lawful. means which we might to prevent our danger; which is not commendable neither. If you wistly observe our Saviours examination before Pilate, you shall find him using all just means of preserving himfelf (he could afterwards bear his crofs, but he would not lay it upon his own neck:) but the boldness I am speaking, is a boldness in the Faith, not denying, not disclaiming the truths of God: this is that mappenela, which we so often read of in the Apostles, Alls 4. 13, 31. and which the Apostles prayed for, ver. 29. This is that which our Lord calleth a not being ashamed of bim before men, and confrantly attendeth true faith and love, (though in a tharp hour of Temptation it may fometimes for a time abate a little, yet it will return again:) and we read it did in divers of the Martyrs, who after they had recanted, returned to their former boldness in the faith, and in the confession of it, and sealed it with their bloud. I added, Meek; passion spoils all things, does no good; the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God; Christ. when he was reviled, reviled not again, but committed his cause to him that judgeth righteoufly; He was led as a lamb to the flaughter. and as a sheep before the shearers, so opened be not his mouth. The meek shall inherit the Earth. You will find it particularly true as to fufferings: you will find in all story, that meek sufferers have kept their station, and preserved their cause alive in the World. when proud and paffionate persecutors have dis-inherited both their cause and their name. Bishop Bonner in Queen Maries days was the most proud and passionate wretch of all those that had their share in that bloody butchery; Many a meek Lamb of Christ he cut the throat of. 'Tis true, they did not inherit the Earth, but bleffed be God their cause doth, when his name is blotted out.

2. The second way to take these Foxes is Patience. Passive patience, a quiet submitting to the Will of God, in suffering what the Enemies of Gods truth will lay upon us for the confession of it; Patiendo vincimus is the true Motto of the Church of Christ: like the depressed Palm it more sourisheth; like the grass trodden in the Winter most with the seet of men, it in the Spring springeth

the more fully. There was never truer faying than favenis Mirsurum femen Boclefie; the blood of the Martyrs was the leed of the Church. I do take it to be a great truth, that as a means next under God, the being of the Christian Religion in the World, ows it felf to the conragious patient Sufferings of the Apostles and the Primitive Christians. The World will have a good opinion of that faith, that may in which they fee no evil, (but what mens ill tongues bely it with.) and which men dare fuffer and die in the detence of. Let me further add, That the being of the Protestant Religion in England owes itself to the sufferings of those bleffed Servants of God in Queen Maries days, when Bonner could curse them because they loved to burn. Nothing but blood will quench those flames fometimes that will certainly do it. Men will either be weary of beating their Fellow-fervants, or God will be weary of fuffering it long; The Rod of the wicked fall not reft for ever upon the lot of the righteous. Those bloody wretches in Queen Maries time at length resolved to burn fewer. Patience is a great Conqueror ; It doth not always change the Persecutors heart; nay, it doth that very feldome. * (Perfecuting argues such an hardned malicious heart as is feldom changed:) but it ordinarily turns the hearts. of Spectators, and it always makes God repent bim, (to use the phrase of Scripture,) that is, moveth God to change the issues of his Providence, and to turn his hand upon their Enemies, and the reason of this is not obscure. God in his chastening of this people hath divers ends, two more confiderable: 1. The punishing of bis peoples wantonness, (the accomplishment of his pleasure on mount Zion, (as the Prophet calleth it, Efay 13.) 2. The ripening of his adversaries iniquity, the ripening of their destruction. That upon you (faith Chrift) may come all the righteous blood that hath been Bed from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zecharias.) Now in a day of Perfecution, when it hath been a little fpent, God hath obtained. both thefe ends: He hath chaftened his people, and the Perfecutors have shewed their malice, and ripened themselves for ruine. This is a second way by which even private Christians may take thefe Foxes, when they Spoil the Vines.

2. A third way is by Paith, Rev. 13. 10. He that leaded into Captivity shall go into Captivity; be that killed with the Sword shall be killed with the Sword. Here's the patience and the saith of the Saints. Observe, There are the Foxes taken: be that leaded into Captivity, shall go into Captivity, &c. How comes this? the hand

of God is doubtless in it; but how comes it to pass as by means to be used on our part ? The latter clause telleth you ; Here is the faith and patience of the Saints, that is, here's the fruit, here is the effect of the faith and patience of the Saints. Patience doth it, faith doth it, in a little different way of working. Patience, besides that it helps to the speedy accomplishment of the Lord's deligns upon Zion in the punishment of his people, and besides the acceptableness of it to God as an exercise of grace: it hath also a rational operation, tyring the Enemy, and fo inclining him to milder courses. Faith doth it by calling in the help of God in the fulfilling of his Promifes, challenging him upon his truth, moving him by a refting upon him, and a committing the Soul unto him. The Apostle Heb. 11. 33, 34. telleth you of those, who did through Faith Subdue Kingdoms, work Righteousness, obtain Promises, ftopped the mouths of Lions, quenched the violence of Fire, escaped the edge of the Sword, &c. I fay, Faith doth this, by bringing in the Omnipotent arm of God to this work. It always works upon a Promife, which the truth of God is engaged to justifie unto the Soul that for it looketh up to him, and trutteth in him.

4. There is but one way more that I know, or two, which I shall make one : An bely blameles life joined with fervent prayer. Holiness is that which will commend itself almost to the vilest men: The World when they hear a mad-brain'd cry out against a Chriftian, Crucifie bim, crucifie bim, will be ready to reply with Pilate, why? What evil bath be done? If all their Enemies can fav in answer, bee, he is an Heretick, or, he is a Schismatick : There's hardly any but understands these have been such common Cudgels, that all prevailing parties have made use of to beat their Enemies, that they will give no fatisfaction at all: These are things the Tems laid to the charge of Paul; The Papifts laid to the charge of all the Martyrs. In thort, they are commonly the Revilings of those who have nothing else to say. And then to this add Prayer; God hath whet his Sword and bent his Bow and made bis arrows ready against the Persecutors: from the first time the thought of perfecuting comes in a wretches heart, . God begins to bend his Bow and whet his Sword, and prepare his arraws against bim, but the arrows are kept in the Quiver; the Bow stands bent a while, the strength of the Lord is not put to the Arrow. Fervent earnest Prayer awakeneth God out of the sleep of his Providence, it bringeth the arm of the Lord to his Bow, and then

the Foxes are quickly taken. And thus I have spoken to the third

Queftion.

The fourth yet remains, viz. How shall the false-Teachers, which 4. 2n. was the fourth Species of Foxes I mentioned) be taken? or what is the Duty of the Church in reference to the taking of them?

The Church confifting of persons cloathed with several powers. This Question will again divide itself into three Questions.

E. What is the duty of the Christian Magistrate in order to the taking of these Foxes?

2. What is the duty of the Pasters and Governours In order to of Churches, the suppres-

3. What may be done, and is the duty of every sing of falle private Christian,

I begin with the first of these, and before I speak to it strictly, I, shall lay down these two Conclusions; the first of which will be granted on all hands: for the second we will dispute with the Church of Rome.

1. That they must be falfe-Teachers. This thus spoken generally, will on all hands be yielded by those that so much as pretend to Religion. The truths of God ought to be taught, and the teachers of them ought not to be taken for Foxes, Papifts: Protestants, yea Pagans and Mahumetans, will thus far agree. But my meaning is a little further, they must be teachers of such falsehoods; av, and fuch Teachers of falshoods in the things of God, as the Word of God makes punishable by the Judg ; for as all moral crimes are not punishable by the Judg, but only such as he can take cognifance of, fo neither are all Spritual crimes : and particularly not all Propositions, nor the teaching of all Propositions which may have a fallhood in them. For, besides that there are infinite Propositions as to which what part is really true will not be infallibly known in this life; Undoubtedly, the Christian Magiffrate as to this part of his Judicature is to be limited by the Word of God; and no other teachers of Falshood will fall under his cognizance, than fuch as the Word of God either in the old or new Testament, either by the direct precept of it or by some prefidents in it. or by some first and just consequence, puts under his judgment and cognizance. And as I told you before, the fe will prove no other than those who teach Doctrines destructive to SalvaSalvation, drawing away men from God, either as to what they are bound to believe, or do and avoid if they will be faved: or else such as tend to the manifest disturbance of the civil peace and

order; but of this possibly more by and by.

2. Secondly, The Magistrate must bimfelf upon due examination know them to be fuch. He hath no other Rule given him than to proceed fecundum allegata & probata; I have often wondred at the blindness of the times of Popery as to this very thing, where their method was this : The Popiff Prelate and his confiftory ufually examined the supposed Heretick, and amongst themselves so determined him, excommunicated him, and declared him an Heretick. Then fignified it to the Civil power, they did not condemn him to death as inferiour Magistrates, but meerly as Church-men declared him beretical, and prayed the Magistrate to punish, Not too feverely, nor yet too gently, &c. (These were the words in thele forms :) So that the entire judgment (after this) at to the species of his punishment was in the Civil Magistrate, who yet never did more, than carry the poor Christian to the Stake and burn him. And thus those Romish Foxes, thoughtlike Pilate, they had mashed their hands of the blood of those just men; because they had bid the Magistrates see to it, (whether they did or no the great day will determine:) but the Magistrate was unquestionably sufficiently loaded, and made but the Executioner of their rage, the satisfier of their bloody thirst. But that which is aftonishing is this, that the Civil Magistrate could ever think that he could answer before God the shedding of Christians blood for pretended crimes, of which he had not the least cognisance but as those Prelates and Priests told him. But supposing the person to be truly a false Teacher, not only who doth in his heart believe what is false but teach it to others, and that in propositions of moment, where the thing erroneously believed doth divide from God. and supposing the Magistrate to have a personal knowledg of it fufficiently evidenced to him, and proved before him. The Oueftion ftill is, what his duty is as to the taking of thefe Foxes? Some tell us, That be bath nothing at all to do as a Magistrate. And of this opinion the Anabaptifts are the great Patrons. How far the Magistrates power extendeth, Whether to take away the life of the offender, or no, is indeed a question amongst sober and learned men ; but that he bath a power committed to bim from God, and a duty incumbent upon bim to take care of Religion, and in order to it

. Episcop. disp.

to reftrain Juch falfe Teachers as I have described, is granted by so- Socious de of. ber Divines of all perswalions, (I think) and denied by Socini- bominis chrians, Anabaptifts and Arminians. It is a large Subject to which stian. c. 1. many Divines have spoken fully, and I shall take it for granted, Rem. Conf. referring you to what hath been fully spoken to it by others, of c. 24. which the learned may find enough in all those who have wrote common places, in their discourses De Magistratu; and those of you that understand not Latine, may satisfie your selves in what hath been wrote by Mr. Cobbet of N. England, and many others. Our question is not about his power, which is abundantly confirm'd by Scripture and Reason, but only about the extent of his power; and here.

1. It will be granted on all hands, That if it be not the Magi-Itrates duty to deny them (as unquestionably it is,) yet he is (at least) at liberty to deny them publick places and priviledges.

This must be granted as to false Teachers of a lower order than I am speaking of, we may do with our own what we please. Publick Rem. Conf. c. 25. places, and publick priviledges are unquestionably the Magistrates own. (Thus much the Arminians themselves confess,) and cannot be reasonably denied; but much more ought the Magistrate to use this power as to fuch false Teachers, who by their Doctrine draw away men from the faith of Christ, and from the way of bolinels: it were unquestionably sin and guilt in him to allow him his houses, and his maintenance to pervert Souls to their eternal ruine and destruction.

2. I must confess I am very inclinable to think, that meer Herefie, or false Teaching, separated from Blasphemy and gross Idolatry and Sedition, ought not to be punished with death by the Magifrate. In three cases, you fee that a falle Teacher may be put to death.

1. In case an eminent disturbance of the civil peace attends his teaching, and his teaching leads to it. This you know was the cafe of Venner and his Complices not many years fince, private men taking the Sword, may be juftly punished by the Sword. God in the whole lystem of his Law hath shewed his care of the preservation of humane Societies and the order of them; if any one teacheth any thing of its own nature tending to the violation of it, or exciting others to it, it may undoubtedly be punished by the Sword to as high a degree as any other Traytors or feditious perfons. The life of the Prince, or the whole body Politick, is

to be by the will of God preferred before the life of any fingle per-

2. In case he teacheth Blasphemy, I make no question but it may be punished by the Sword; but yet I would be tender in this case, and by it understand only reproachful scandalous Blasphemy. No man can fo much as pretend conscience for reviling by the law of God of old: the Blasphemer was to be put to death. This you know was the charge against Naboth, Christ and Stephen. It is true, they erred in the particular judgment, but the Blasphemer was to die, Luke 24. 16. Blasphemy is taken in a large sense even in relation to God; he that denieth God to be what indeed he is, is a blasphemer, and thus doubtless the Socinians are great blasphemers both against the second and third person in the Trinity; but yet I should hardly agree the putting them to death for these opinions how abominable soever, but if they cannot be content to deny our Lord his Divine nature, and to spread this; but they must reproach, and revile our bleffed Lord and the holy Spirit, and be pertinacious in it, I think they ought to die: and I take it to be the same case as to the boly Scriptures which are the Law of our God. Thus much I think the very light of nature would teach the Magistrate if there were no Scripture. There can be no pretence of conscience for such extravagancies.

3. The third case is gross Idolatry. This was the Law of God in the old Testament, Deut. 13. that it is not his will under the new Testament; I know no Text faith it, nor can I understand any reason for it: It was no typical or carnal Ordinance, and so upon that account abolished: and why any one should judg it a municipal Law respecting only the Jewish polity, and ceasing with that, I cannot tell, confidering how much the glory of God is eternally concerned in the suppression of Idolatry, and how jealous he is of his glory, and that the Scripture mentioneth it everywhere as the greatest sin in its kind, and therefore compareth it to Whoredome. But what Idolaters may or ought thus to be punished, is another question, If I might offer my opinion in this case, I should determine, Such only wherein men ferve other gods : of fuch God speaks Deut. 13. 2, 8. In short, I think in a Christian Common-wealth , Publick open worshippers of other gods ought not to be endured, but after caution and admonition if they wil not be amended, they may be put to death, and if Apostates they ought to die. Son of man (faith God to Exechiel.) They have fet up Idols in

their

their heart, but fuch Idolaters ought not to dies Nay, there is an Idolatry in open action, which I see no ground for the Magistrate to punish with death. When the true God is worshipped, though before an Image, undoubtedly this is Idolatry; but whether the Magistrate ought to punish it with death or no, I doubt : It was indeed punished in extraordinary manner upon the Ifraelites by death, when they had made and worshipped the golden Calf; but we do not find it further prefidented in the ordinary course of Magistracy amongst the Jews: though first Micab, then the ten Tribes under Feroboam ran into it. That this is Idolatry and an hainous fin to be punished by the Judge; I can easily grant, whether with death or no, I doubt. I do rather think the Law of God respects the Idolatry of Abab. These in the groffest sense were other gods, when the true God was not at all worshipped, but the creature in flead of him. If any openly worshippeth the Sun, Moon or ftars, or any other creature, and will not be reclaimed after due admonition and patience, I do think that by the Law of God he ought to die. But except in these cases, I do very much doubt the putting of any to death for false Teaching. I am aware that there are both the judgments of divers Calvinist Divines, as well as the Popish Divines against me, some of whose names I very much honour: but I cannot fee with their eyes, nor do I know by what light they faw any fuch thing the Will of God under the Gospel; I do not know any Scripture directs it: neither have I heard that any Council of any Antiquity determined it. The first Council I can meet with determining fuch a punishment was that of Constance, no older than 1415, where the Popish Synagogue condemned John Hus and Hierome of Prague, though the Primitive Church had most dangerous Hereticks. Arins, Macedonius, Nestorim, whom they confuted, convicted, and thrust out of the Church, yet none of them were put to death by Christian Emperours, but Constantine the Great utterly refused it. I would have this Bloody field left to be the ground of the Arms of the City of Rome, which hath so long since made her felf drunk with the bloud of the Saints under that notion; and for those Examples of Protestant feverity we have in Church-story, as that of Valentinus Gentilis at Berne, Servetus at Geneva, and others, I do believe upon the reading of the stories, we shall find they were guilty either of repreachful blasphemy, or leading people into arms against the publick peace. Christ would not have his servants pluck up the tares that Hhh 2

were in the field, Matth. 13. left they should pluck up the wheat alfo. But I shall not here enlarge upon this Subject which would

ask a fuller discourse.

3. In the third place, I believe it the duty of Christian Magifrates, by other punishments proportioned to the offence to punish Inch as teach any thing destructive to the faith and boliness of Christians. I do not at all doubt, but if any one shall teach any thing contrary to what must necessarily be believed in order to Salvation, or destructive of that holiness without which none can see God; he may be (though not put to death) yet punished by the Judge, by banishment, imprisonment, (in case of incorrigibleness) pecuniary mulcts. Thus Constantine the Great banished Arrius and bis fix followers, and afterwards the Novatians, Valentinians, &c. Honorius and Theodofius banished Pelagius, &c. And thus indeed hath been practiced by all Christian Magistrates; and I doubt not but the same is the Magistrate's duty by the Word of God against any that shall deny the Scriptures, which are the foundation of faith and boliness, or who shall deny Christ or his divine Nature, or teach any doctrine openly tending to licentiousnes? All those arguments which Divines bring in the case from the Magiffrates duty to be a terrour to evil works, or the nature of Herefe as it is a work of the flesh; or from reason concerning his duty to take care of his Subjects Salvation, I think are thus far cogent, and no further. For Opinions that are not of this tendency what power Gods word hath given the Magistrate to suppress, and punish the teachers of them, I shall only fay I do not underfland, and fo I pass from the Concern of the Christian Magistrate, to the Concern of the Gospel-Minister as to the Taking of these Foxes. His work is more clearly described in Scripture, and comprehended in three things : 1. Diligence in preaching, 2. Faithfulness in reproving and convincing, 3. Rejecting after admonition: and here God hath fet him his bounds.

1. It is unquestionably his duty to be diligent and faithful in preaching, and opening the whole Counsel of God. If Husbandmen did not sleep too much, the Enemy could not sow so many tares. Blind Guides have been the Equivocal cause of false Teachers. It is the Shepherds duty to watch over his slock, and if he doth that, the Wolf or the Fox will do no hurt; but if the Shepherd be blind and hath no eyes; if the Dog be dumb, and either cannot or will not bark, it is no wonder if the slock be made a prev.

If Ministers must have such charges of Souls entrusted to them, as it is impossible (were they Angels) they should take care of, (for Angels can be but in one place at the same time:) or if they take no pains in Preaching in season, and out of season, in instructing their people, and shewing them the way of truth; it is no

wonder if the Foxes take inflead of being taken.

2. Another part of the ministerial work, as to such Foxes, lyes in convincing gain fayers that refift the truth, Tit. 1. 2. and to this purpose he must be able as well as faithful, (which two were the old qualifications of Ministers, 2 Tim. 2.2.) This ability lies in a full acquaintance with the Scriptures: Timothy had it from a Child. Apollos was mighty in them, yea and give me leave to tell you, that the gifts of tongues being now ceased, a knowledg of those tongues in which the Scriptures were wrote, is also necessary to this ability, if fuch as should teach people, be not themselves knowing in the Scriptures, yea and in the fense and meaning of them too; and if they be if they will take no pains to convince gain-fayers it is no wonder if these Foxes be not taken. Foxes are not catche by laying falt on their tayls (as we use to jest with Children) my meaning is, not with rayling, and crying Hereticks, Hereticks, but with and by a folid convincing them of their erroneous Doctrine and that from the word of God; and I say this requireth both ability and faithfulness. 'Tis both the least and ought to be unquestionably the last Duty of a Minister of the Gospel, to ca'l for help from the Magistrate; and was never so much in use as since, pretended Ministers, could or would do little of their proper office.

The third piece of the Ministerial work lies in rejetting, after the first and second admonision: The Apostical rule is plain. An Heretick after the first and second admonition reject, Tit. 3. 2. By rejetting, is unquestionably meant excommunication, casting out of the communion of the Church. The Apostle calls it a delivering up to Satan, and practiced it upon Hymeneus and Alexander, 2 Tim. 1. 10. It is the work of the Minister of the Gospel, and that with the Church, Matt. 18. its ridiculous to cast them out of a communion with whom the Church will have communion. It is no light matter and therefore not to be done suddainly; but saiththe Apostle, after the first and second admonition; and this must be leisurably pronounced, not all a breath, (Souls are not so cheap as to be thrown the Devil in such haste, 2 Tim. 2. 25. The man of God with meekstess.

meekness must instruct those that oppose themselves if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the sare of the Devil, who are led captives by him at his will. No nor must it be for every trivial thing, you read but of two excommunications in Scripture; the one of the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 5. that was for no light thing, no less than incest: The other was that of Hymeneus and Alexander, that was when they had both made Shipwrack of Faith and a good Conscience too. But when the Gospel-Minister hath gone thus far he hath done, the malesactor is out of the Church; and the Church judgeth but its own members.

The third and last piece of duty is upon the private Christian. What can he do to take these Foxes, these little Foxes; He cannot kill them, nor banish them. He cannot ecclesiastically admo-

nish or excommunicate them; well, what shall he do?

I answer, these Foxes are then in a great degree taken, when they

do not take.

In the first place it is unquestionably the duty of every private Christian, to convince gain-sayers so far as be is able, and there is a fraternal correption or adminition, as well as a pastoral and ecclesiastical correption: this in the first place is undoubtedly every private Christians duty, the private Epbesians, may and ought to say to Archippus, take beed to thy Ministry; much more to such as teach false doctrine contrary to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. But this is not all.

2. It is their duty to try them, to mark them, and to avoid them. They are to try the Spirits, I Joh. 4. I. they are not to believe every Spirit. The Bereans searched the Scriptures, (though Paul preached) and are called noble Bereans for it. The Church of Ephelus tried them that said they were Apossles, Rev. 2. 2. yea and they are to mark them, Rom. 16.17. that they may avoid them: mark, and avoid, whom? those that make divisions and offences contraty to the Doctrine, you have heard. They are to mark them that they may avoid them. The same mouth which commands us to take heed what we hear, commands us to take heed what we hear, commands us to take heed what we hear, and indeed the latter is necessary in order to the sormer: To run into the Foxes holes is no way to catch them. The giddiness of Christians to hear those, whom they before knew, teachers of Doctrines contrary to the Doctrine of Faith and Holiness, is one great cause why instead of Christs Spouse [taking these Foxes] so

many;

many have been taken by them. Thus I have flewed you so far as the Scripture guides what is the will of God, concerning his Spouse taking these Foxes: Whether his Spouse be cloathed with the robes of the Magistracy, or the gowns of the Ministry, or be only in a private capacity. I should now come to the Application; but for one particle in my Text. Take for us, which made me put into my Proposition. That this is the Duty of the Spouse of Christ, as well for his lake as for her own sake.

This will need few words to demonstrate; if you consider the reason annexed to the precept: For they spoil the Vines. How they spoil the Vines I have shewed. Now that it is the Lords Interest, that the Vines be not spoiled, will appear to you if you consi-

der.

That the Vines are the only plants that bring forth fruit unto God and unto Christ. All the trees of the wide Forrest of the world are the Lords, he hath planted them by the hand of his creating power; he makes them to grow and to fpread. But (fet the Church a-fide within whose compass all the Vines are,) what fruit is brought forth unto God by them. They alone own, they alone ferve, or so much as pretend to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. The Pagan world brings forth fruit unto the Devil, him they ferve, they know not whether there be a Chrift or no. Formal profeffors (who yet are a kind of Vines,) They are empty Vines, that only bring forth fruit to themselves. The true Christians are the only plants in the world which bring forth fruit unto Christ. From whence, the service to Christ in the hindering of any thing; which may spoil those Vines, and especially when they have tender Grapes is evident enough. Nor is the service to themselves evident from the word spoil. There need no words to evince it a good service to our selves to hinder any thing that would spoil us; but the Text faith, they Spoil the Vines. These Foxes whether by them you understand, Intestine corruptions, or forreign temptations, or persecuters, or false teachers, they all (as I have thewed you) first the Vines. There needs no further evidence to prove that it is a good service to take them. I shall therefore add no more, to the proof of the Proposition; but thut up all in a short practical Application, I thall bring all I thall fay under two heads. Instruction, and Exhortation.

Observe from hence, that there are more than one species of Fox. 1. Use es. Nor are all Foxes, that men call so; whatsoever spoils Christia. Is Branche

ons as to the fruits of Holinefs; and especially whiles the habits of grace are imperfect in them, comes under the denomination of Foxes in this Text, whose nature is described to us here from their spoiling the Vines; what hath made so many interpreters restrain this Text only to false teachers . I do not understand, unless it hath been their imitation of some Popille Interpreters, who indeed generally fo Interpret it. Bernard is the only Interpreter of any antiquity whom I find making a more general Interpretation of the Text: he as (I have told you before) interpreteth it of corruptions within us, and temptations without us, as well as false teachers: corruptions are Foxes, temptations are Foxes, Perfecutions are Foxes as well as feducers. Nor are all falle teachers truly Foxes; but fuch only as spoil the Vines, as to the fruits of Faith and Holinels.

2. Branch.

Secondly, Observe from hence there are more ways than one to take thefe Foxes. The precept hath a limitation in those words take for us, as well as an end expressed. There is no taking for Christ but such as he directetb in his word. Our Lord could as easily have said, kill us the Foxes, as take us the Foxes; but a grave Author tells us, non venit Christus animas perdere fed falvare: Christ came not to destroy mens lives, but to five their Souls; he rebuked his Disciples when they would have had fire brought down from Heaven upon the Samaritanes, he tells them, They knew not what Spirit they were of. He defires not the death of finners: Mavult incentiva vitiorum in usum virtutum commutari quam extingui vel absumi, faith Gregory; where the pretended Vicar of Christ learned, to kindle formany fires upon the Earth, to burn fuch as Christ would not suffer fire from Heaven to be called for against. I cannot tell. There is a taking of them by not receiving them into our boufes; nor bidding them God speed, 2 70b. 20. by convincing them, admonifhing them and casting them out of the Church: of this we read, 1 Tim. 1. 3, 20. But a taking of them, and killing and burning them we read not of in all the Gospel. Even Foxes tur qui suffusus must be taken by those nets, which our Lord hath directed us to take them by, or 'tis no fervice to Christ. Bernard (though a Pabescens proprium pift) of old interpreted this, Take you, divers other ways than the latter Church of Rome, non armis fed argumentis; Not by force of arms, but by arguments fairh he : and again, by kindness and pateffis off. Bern. tience, and prayers to God for them; by making them ashamed of their errors. I wish (faith that devout Author) I could so

Captusillevideora rubore erujudicium ipfe fue confessionis & panitentia 1 Conc.

take all that are my adversaries as to gain them to Chrift.

3, Laffly, By way of infreuction : Oblerve the Text, Take wonderful love to her. Bernard hints this branch of Application to me: Quid (faith he) bac voce focialins ? annon sibi viderer bee dicere quafi Pater-familiar , qui per fe nibil babeat fed omnia communiz cum uxore et liberis? What more fellowly than this expression? (faith he) doth not our Lord in this expression speak like a Maffer of family, that hath all things common with his wife and Children? he that speaks (faith he) is God, but he doth not fpeak as a God, but as a Bridegroom. Vide quam focialiter loquitar Bernardus is qui focium non habet, Poterat dicere mibi, fed dicit nobis confortio de- ferm. 59. lectatur; he could have faid for me, but he faith for us; delighted in our fellowship, O fravitatem ! O Gratiam! O amoris vim. O the sweetness, O the grace, O the force of divine Love ! God hath conjoined his interest with ours, we cannot serve him but in and by it we must serve our selves; and certainly this meditation digested, should have the highest imaginable efficacy to affect our hearts with love to God, and Zeal to our duty.

I hall thur up all with a word of Exhortation; which will be but the words of our Lord in the Text : Take therefore the Foxes,

the little Foxes. Here,

1. Were I speaking before Magistrates, I would call upon them, To take the Foxes, the little Foxes. To use the power with which our Lord hath betrufted them, for the hindring, and suppressing of whatfoever or whofoever they be, that hinder profesfors from the bringing forth fruits of holinels, whether they be profane perfons, that think to fooff and jear men out of the way to Heaven; or loofe and debaucht perfons, that make it their buliness to debauch Christians into lewd and licentious courses: Or malitious perfecutors, who fly upon the Image of God where-ever they fee it, as they fay fome Serpents will do upon the representation of a mans face though it be but in a glass. Or false Teachers, those I mean who tempt men to go and ferve other gods, or who would wring out of our hands, the holy Scriptures the very rule of our Faith, and life. Or who teach men to be profane by principles; teaching Doctrines that are of their own natures destructive to a godly and holy life, or destructive of mens Salvation, as denying the Lord that bought them. I should not dare to call upon them, to ruine and deftroy all those that every idle Priest hath the impudence

dence to call Hereticks and Schifmaticks, Lord I how much of Gods wheat hath been thus pull'd up inflead of tares by Magi-firates in Popish time? But where the Magistrate knows that the person is a Blasphemer, an Idolater, a Teacher of Doctrine in its own tendency, leading to civil disturbance, or to the overthrow of the Fundamentals of Faith and Holines: But I am not in such

an auditory.

2. Were I speaking before an auditory consisting either wholly. or much of my Reverend Fathers and Brethren, in the work of the Ministry; I would speak to them likewise to be serviceable both to their Lord, and to their own and peoples Souls; by taking the Foxes, the little Foxes, by opening to their people the whole counfel of God; by Preaching against fin, teaching men to mortify their lufts and Corruptions (the worst Foxes in the world;) by strengthening their people against temptations, by preaching down, envy, malice, bitternels, batred, the roots of persecution, and preaching up Brotherly Love, mutual forbearing one another. I would fpeak to them, to take falle Teachers Bernards way, non armis fed argumentis; not by weapons but by arguments convincing them of their errours. One good argument will do more than a thousand jeers, and pittiful quibbles, or more down-right revilings. I should advise them in stead of crying out to the Magifirate, a Fox, a Fox, to fet themselves in earnell to take them, by convincing them of the truth, by confuting their errors by downright Scripture-argument, by Gospel-admonishing them, by leisurable rejecting them if they will not hear. This would more become the Minister of the Gospel, than running presently to the next Juffice to tell him he hath a Fox in bis parish, though that may be his duty, but not till that which is his proper work be first done. The truth is we live in an age, when many owning the name of Ministers, take little care to catch the Foxes which spoil the Lords Vines, unless an empty bollowing alone would do it. But I forbear confidering my auditory.

3. Let me close all, with the inforcement of this duty upon every particular Soul that is before the Lord this day: Take the Foxes, the little Foxes. I have prevented my felf as to much enlargement having before shewed you, what these Foxes were and how they

may be taken.

1. Live in the mortification of your lufts. These of all others are the most destructive to Christ's Vines, the very nature of the Fox

leth in luft and corruption. O take thefe Foxes! you shall have a great many very zealous for taking Foxes abroad, but they do not dig them out earthed in their own Souls; you cannot fee nor hear them in publick but they are in full chafe after Foxes, (Hereticks Schismaricks as they will call them whether so or no:) There whole bulinels is a hollowing after them, and a running them down with all the might they can make (right or wrong;) but in the mean time, none can come near them, but they must fmell fo much pride, prompting them to think themselves alone are infallible. So much malice and envy, not induring a good word of their Brother, and directing all imaginable arrows at their hearts, to fay nothing of the love of prebeminence (Diotrephes his difeafe,) or the world, which was Demas his luft, or the sensual pleasures of this life. That every one who cometh near them may foesk the worlt Foxes earthed in their own bolome. Thus they fay fome Hunts-men tire themselves in chasing of Foxes far from home; but spare them nearer for their sport. Nay thus the Fox they say it felf preyeth farthest from home, and spareth the Lambs that are near its own burrough; but, Oh, Let it not be fo with wou!

2. Live in a daily watchfulness, against, and a relistance of temptations to sin, watch and pray that you enter not into Temptations. As to your greatest enemies live in the exercise of Fairb and Patience, in a bold, and yet meek and humble, consession of the truths and ways of Christ. And as to seducers and false Teachers, Take them also, as the Apostles took the Corinthians, 2 Cor. 12.13. being crafty I took you by gaile, take them by taking heed they do not take you. First discern them, if their heresy be damnable berefy. For such there is (as the Apostle tells us) destructive of Faith or Holmess, giving liberty to the stell, leading you to loofness of life, or to a depial of the Fundamentals of Religion, avoid them. Let them be to you as Heathers and Publicanes: Where their opinions are not evidently of this tendency, take them by Love, by mutual forbearance. But these things I have enlarged upon before; you have arguments enough in the Text.

t. They are Foxer, therefore not fit company for Lambs and Sheep, which are the names Christ gives his people.

2. They fpoil the Vines. The law of nature teacheth every one to preferve himself.

3. You are Christs Vines, bought with the price of his blood.

4. His Vines bone tender Gropes ; you have imperfect habits of

grace, which without care may quickly be deftroyed.

5. And Lastly. This will be a service to Christ, as well as to your own Souls: Take us the Foxes. All these might be enlarged; but I have prevented my self in the explication: I shall therefore add no more to my discourse upon this Subject.

rights mean time, note the comencar them but haven much for all persons the comencar them but have been made to be the comencar them. So attach market, and care the comencar the comencar to the comencar them.

Cant. 2. 16, 17.

My Beloved is mine, and I am bis. He feedeth amongst the Lillies, until the day break, and the shadows slee away. Turn my Beloved, and he thou like a Roe or young Hart upon the Mountains of Bether.

T is the Spoule that speaks, the Church, the believing Soul ; that's agreed amongst all Interpreters, and as little doubted but that Christ is the Beloved here mentioned; for whom hash a believer in Heaven but him, whom upon the Earth to be compared with bimfelf? Her Beloved had turned his back from her, that is plain from the 17. v. the faith, turn my Beloved, that is retun my Beloved, for the doubtless doth not bid him depart from her; yet he was but newly departed, for but even now the heard him faying. Rife up my Love, my fair one, and come away ; and again, let me bear thy voice and fee thy countenance, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely. A believer may live by Faith, when the cannot live by fight; the may hear him speak, when the doth not fee his face; and this is an admirable use of the word when from it we can raife conclusions of Faith. When, as Manoah's Wife faid, If the Lord would have killed us, be would not accepted our Sacrifice: So the Soul can conclude, If God would have cast me off for ever, If I had been a reprobate. God would never have spake fo kindly to me in his word, his word would never have been fo fweet unto my taffe. Whether we have here the Soul in its triumph, rapt into the third Heavens, whether in the body or out of the body the cannot tell, the words taken alone, found to, my Beloved is mine; or only in the strong exercise of Faith and adherence. I cannot tell; the words following feem to favour the latter, and I am bir: I may name Delrio's connexion of these words

between Chrift and a believer

with the former. My beloved, there is no fear of the Foxes spoiling me; Tam adamanting disclients node unit! summe no vnipecule dissolvere non possint; My Beloved is so much mine and my heart is so much his, that the Foxes shall not separate, no, if they be Absolume Foxes with Fire brands betwint their tails, they shall do no hurt:

they may bark, they shall not bite.

We have here, as forme think, the Soul in an extaly of joy, not with the fool that rejoyced; he had goods laid up for many years, this is the worldlings joy: Not with the Pharifee glorving that he was no debaucht person, nor yet as his Neighbour, this is the Formalifis joy; Not like Haman, glorying in his titles of Honour and Princes favour, this is the Courtiers joy, but glorving in this that the match was made up between Christ and ber, My beloved is mine, and I am bis: In the fense of this Union that the could fav, my Beloved is mine, and I am bis; glorying in her Tuftification, my Beloved is mine, and in her Santification, I am bis. This is the glorying that God commanded Fer. 9. 24. Let bim that glorieth glory in bis, that he understandeth and knoweth me. Glorying in the Lord according to the Apostles Rule, I Cor. 1. 31. This is the rejoycing our Lord commended to his Disciples. That their names were written in the Book of life. This is the Christians. glorving

But mark the order: First, my Beloved is mine, then I am his ; if he had not been first hers, the could never have been his.

In the Hebrem the Verb is wanting, which hath given a little latitude to Interpreters according to the difference of the Verb they understand: My beloved [to] or [of] me & I [to] or [of] him; that's all in the Heb. Indeed it is in the Heb. ", To me, 17, To him but it is Delrio's note, that in the Hebr. when dominion or pof-Tellion is spoken of Solet Dativus babere vim Genitivi; The Dative case hath then the force of the Genitive. We translate it umine, to which the Arabiek version agreeth. The others read it to me. which gives Bernard the advantage of understanding the Verb intendit, my Beloved intends for me, and I intend for bim : And it may be the learned Mercer is not far from this Interpretation expounding these words. Non ille aliam velit amicam nec ego amicum, uter que in alterim acquie cit amore, & coeft contentus : He will have no other wife, and I will have no other Husband; we are refolved one for another, and are satisfied each with the love of other, But I do not think this reacheth the full fense of these words : befides, that when in a fentence there wants a Verb, it is more usual to understand the Verb Est. My Beloved is to me and I to bim ; we tranffate it is mine.

Thefe two Verfes, (as is before noted by a very va- S Faith, ? luable Interpreter,) contains the Spoules Prayer.

1. Her Faith, and that both with respect to the time prefert. My Beloved is mine, and I am his, and with respect to the Time to come, until the day break, and the hadows flee away.

2. Her Prayer, that is in the last words : Turn my Beloved, and be then like a Roe and a young Hart upon the mountains of Bether.

The Doctrines from these words are these:

There is a conjugal Union between Christ and a believing Soul 1. Prop. and that such as some withdrawings of Christ do not disfolve.

> That the believing Soul may know this Union, and be able under the withdrawings of Christ to fax I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine. Chrift is first owne, then we are bis.

At the same time in which a Believer can fay, I am my Beloveds, 4. Prop.

be is mine; it must be also able to fay, I am bis. A Believer may not only know be in Christs, and Christ is bis, but that it shall be for untill the day break and the shadows flee a-

msy. That every gracious Soul even under the withdrawings of Christ. defireth that Christ would return, and that with all possible speed unto ber : as a Roe, (with the pace of a Roe or a young Hart) upon the mountains of Bether. Of all thefe, (God willing) I thall dif-

course in their order.

You see here sour or five great points of Divinity will fall into discourse. The first concerning the mystical Union between Christ and a Soul. The second concerning Assurance, or the certainty a believing Soul may have of this Union. The third concerning Perseverance, and the certainty the Believer may have of the abiding of this Union, Till the day break, and the fluxdows flee away. The fourth concerning the order of Grace in its operations : yea, and a fifth concerning the duty of a Christian upon this certainty, and in order to the maintaining of it, and the certainty of it under the Lords withdrawings from it: Of all thefe God willing in their order.

2. Prop.

3. Prop.

5. Prop.

6.Prop.

There is a Conjugal Union betwies Christ and the believing Soul, 1. Propared that such a one, as the withdrawings of Christ in some degrees

dotb not diffolve, nor argue diffolved.

Christ was at this time with drawn, She calls unto him to Turn unto ber , yet faith the My beloved is mine, and I am bis : though the be not in my eye, yet I knew I am'in bis beart, yea, and he is in) my beart too. There is, I fay, a conjugal union betwirt Christ and his Church, between Chrift and the Soul that hath received him. This is a great mysterie, the Doctrine of the Mystical union between Chrift and the Soul. The Scripture plainly fpeakethit, and by many things resembleth it; but it is an hard thing for us to comprehend it, how the whole person of him who is the second person in the Trinity, should be united to the whole person of the Believer ; I'm you, faith Chrift, and you in me. But I intend not to speak to this Doctrine in the compass of it. It is admirably spoken to by many Divines; sufficiently by none, nor is any tongue able to express it. It is shadowed out to us by many things in Scripture, but they are all but fladows : One while our Lord expresseth it to us by the union of the Vine and the branches, Fobn 15. 1. I am the Vine, you are the branches. Another while by the refemblance of the bead and members: Another time by the union of the Corner flones, and other flones in the Building ; but I told you, I designed not upon the advantage of this Text to discourse that point in the compass of it. Amonest other refemblances, the union betwixt the busband and the mife is one : and that is that which is made use of here. The Spouse doth not fay Christ is mine and I am bis ; but my Beloved is mine, and I am bis : and this refemblance is much made use of in Scripture. You shall find it, 1. In the promifes of boly Writ, 2. In the affertions of Seripture, 3. In the Scriptures discourse of Divine Providences, as leading to it. Hof. 2. 16, 19, 20. Thou halt in that day call me Ihi, thou halt call me no more Boali, Ishi is my bushand y Boali is my Lord. Ver. 19. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever. yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteoufness and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies ; I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulnefs. Efuy 62. 4. The Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land hall be married.

2. The Scriptures that affert such a state between Christ and the Church: Christ and a believing Soul are very many. I will but touch upon some, you have them both in the old Testament,

2 Cor. 12. 2.

and in the New, Jer. 3. 14. Turn, O back fliding children, faith the Lord for I am married unto your In the New Testament, John the Baptift, proving that Christ was more excellent than he and

Joh. 3. 28,29. that himself was not the Meffias , proves it thus: I am not the Chrift, but I am fent before bim; He that bath the Bride is the Bridegroom : He could have faid. Christ is the Lord of the Church, the Church is his, but he chaleth to express the same thing under the notion of Marriage, calling Christ a Bridegroom, his Sponfe, his Church, and the truly believing Soul the Bride. Chriff himfelf Matt. 9. 15. fpeakerh in the fame dialect while he tells the Pharifees his Difci-

Matt. 25. v. I. ples could not mourn while the Bridegroom is with them. And in the parable of the ten Virgins, he again compareth himself to a Bridgeroom. In fread of many I will only add one Text more. where the Apolle largely discourseth this; it is that Epb. s. from ver. 22. to ver. 33 . Ver. 23. The busband if the bead of the wife. as Christ is the head of the Church. Ver. 32. This is a great mysterie.

but I freak concerning Christ and bis Church.

3. The Scripture speaking of the Providences of God by the minittry of the Word, gaining and preparing of Souls for a clotting with and receiving of Chrift, fpeaks in this language alfo; I have esponsed you to one busband, that I may present you as a chast Virgin to Christ. It remaineth only as to the Doctrinal part of my Difcourse. That I shew you the propriety of this Notion, and the aptness of it to express that Bleffed union which is betwixt our bleffed Lord and every believing Soul : that I shall do in some few

particulars under this one Head.

1. The Union between the busband and the wife, is a moral and legal union: Moral in opposition to Natural. There is a natural union between the head and members, but there is no more than a moral and legal union between the husband and wife; A. moral Union not founded in an identity of Nature, but in love, and in some mutual ftipulation, and a legal union it is; so as the Law looketh upon them, (though in themselves two persons formally and materially diffinct.) yet legally they are one: the Law looks upon them as one. The Wives debt is the Husbands debt, and the Husbands payment of it is the same as if the Wife paid. Such now is the union between Christ and the believing Soul : it is not a natural union flowing from natural original, nor lying in any identity or famenels of being, or nature ; (though fometimes to express the ftraitness (fit, it be expressed by things betwixt which

which is a natural union. Indeed look apon Christ (as to his homane nature) there is a natural union between him and us: Foresmuch as the children were pareakers of fless and blood, he also took pare with them, but as to the divine nature of Christ this is impossible. The Apostle indeed speaking of the Saints, saith, They are made pareakers of the divine nature; but that must be understood of the vertues of the divine nature, purity and boliness; not as to the essence or substance of it for that is not communicable to any creature; we are and must be finite, he is infinite. It is a moral Union, 1. founded in love, 2. Depending upon a Cove-

nant, or ftipulation : I fay,

1. Founded in love, free, infinite love. Such is the union between Christ and the believing Soul, such is the union between the burband and the wife ; it is love that makes the Husband and Wife one. The foul of my Son Shechem longesh for your daughter, faith Hamor, Gen. 34. 8. The heart of Christ cleaveth to a Believer: We may fay of Christ and the Believer, as it is faid of David and Jonathan, the foul of Jonathan was knit with the foul of David : The Soul of Christ is knit with the believing Soul, and he loves him as his own Soul, but yet with this difference. There is fome ground ordinarily for that love which bottometh the conjugal union betwixt creatures. The Philosopher faith similitude amorem gignit. Love amongst creatures generally is founded in some similitude, but it is not lo here; we have no likeness to him but what his love makes but however this union is founded in love it is his love, his free infinite love that humbles him to an union with any rom the lead assess between Soul.

2. But secondly, As in the Conjugal Relation though love bottoms the union, yet it is the marriage-Covenant that maketh it, and till that be made they are not one flesh, and so it is here. That which makes the union betwixt Christ and the Soul, is the Souls acceptance of the Covenant of Grace: The Covenant was made between God and Christ from before the soundation of the World it is offered to every Soul in the preaching of the Gospel, the Soul by a true faith accepteth of this, receiveth the Lord Jesus Christ, saith, Lord, I will have thee to be my Lord, my Saviour to save me, my Prophet to instruct me, my King to rule and govern me, and doth this with a true, and not with a whorish heart; this man now, this woman is become the Spouse of Christ conjugally united unto him: Thus you see it is a meral union, not a natural, but

a moral union: from whence you may observe,

1. The blasphemy and wildness of them, who tell us Believers are Christed, and Godded; this must argue a natural-Union which is impossible.

2. You may observe that naturally we are strangers to God, alienated from the life of God, children of wrath by nature, as the Apostle expresses it, otherwise there would be no need of any

fuch moral Union.

2. But secondly I added, That the Conjugal union is a legal naion; the Husband and Wise are not one in nature: they are two distinct persons, but they are One in Lam. Such is the Us nion between Christ and a Believer: they are two distinct substances, but yet in Gods lam one, and this is a point of infinite comfort to a poor Soul; for I pray observe amongst men what sollows upon this, upon this, I say, that the man and his wise are in

Law one. I will touch upon but two or three things.

to any thing that is her Husbands, and call it hers, the is endowed with his goods and hath a joint propriety in them. The Believer also by this Union can go to any thing of Christs, and call it hers for her use, for her good; he can go to the merits, righteensness and Satisfaction of Christ, and say, This is mine: mine for my justification. He can go to the Spirit of Christ, To the sulness of Christ, and say, This Spirit is mine for my Sanctification: This fulness is mine, I John 16. Of his sulness we receive grace for grace.

Secondly, From the legal union betwixt the bushand and wife follows the hushands concern in his wives debts: if the were in debt before he married her, he must pay it: if the runs in debt after marriage, still he must answer. The Law makes them both one, and falls upon the head of the woman which is the man: Thus I am sure it is in this Union, Rom. 8, 33. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of Gods Elect? it is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, year ather that is risen again.

Thirdly, The Law suffereth not the Husband and Wife to part, (unless in case of Adultery;) where there is a true legal Martiage-union there can be no separation: such is the Union between Christ and the believing Soul. The Apostle speaketh to this, Rom. 8.35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? And again, ver. 39. Only in two things the legal Union between Christ

and the believing Soul bath the advantage of the legal Union which is betwire the Husband and the Wite: 1. Adultery either on the Husbands or the Wives part may break the union betwire the Husband and the Wife, and often doth diffolye it. 2. Death

shall dissolve that union.

1. I fay, Adultery may diffolve the union betwixt the Husband and Wife. Thus it is by the laws of men and that according to the Law of God, but it is not fo as to the union between Christ and the Soul. Now this dependeth upon the Covenant God hath made with his people; and here is a little difference betwixt the Collective Spouse of Christ, (understanding by it a particular Church,) and the Individual Spouse of Christ, viz. the truly believing Soul. Undoubtedly, there may be fuch a degree of finning in a particular Church, as may wholly unchurch it. God hath faid unto his ancient people the Jews Loammi, Tou are not my people. He hath done the like to the Churches in Afia, the name of Christ is not known now in those places. There is a degree of Apostacy and Idolatry which utterly destroyeth Churches: but the case is otherwise between Christ and the particular Soul; Whom I love (faith Christ) I love to the end. It was Gods Covenant of old: I will put my fear into their hearts, and they shall never depart from me, and I will never depart from them to do them good: They shall be kept by the power of God to Salvation; they shall fland, for God is able to make them fland. God may indeed as to his providences. or as to the gradual manifestations of bis grace put away a Soul as it were from him, but the union by it is not diffolved. The Communion of a Soul with God may be interrupted, and frequently is by Sin, but the Union cannot be dissolved. You have an excellent Scripture, Fer. 3. 1. If a man put away bis wife and she go from bim, and become another mans, shall be return unto ber again? (hall not that land be polluted greatly? But thou baft played the barlot with many Lovers : vet return unto me faith the Lord, Ver. 14. Turn O back-fliding children (faith the Lord;) Mark the foundation of this in the next words : For I am married unto you, faith the Lord. Divorce quite untied the Marriage-knot betwixt the Hufband and Wife, they were now separated and none must join them. It was the pollution of a Land for a man to take his wife again after he had put her away, and the had become another mans ; But faith the Lord, Thou baft plai'd the barlot ; and that not with few, but with many lovers, yet return unto me, A graci-Kkk 2 ous

one Soul shall not fin unto death s. it may fin so as God may put it emay at so bis Providence, and as so bis sensible manifestations, but it cannot fin unto a dissolution of the Union between Christ and it. The Communion may be interrupted, but not the Union dissolved. Now I say, the reason of this dependeth upon the Marriage-Covenant; it is not because the Believer sinneth not, who liveth and sinneth not against God? nor because the sins of Believers have less demerit in them than the sins of others: fin hath guilt inseparably annexed to it; but the Covenant of Christ with the Soul is of another nature: He hath covenanted with the Soul,

1. That his feed shall abide in it, it shall not sin unto death, I Joh. 3. 9. That he will punish its iniquity with Rods, and its transgressions with stripes, but his loving kindness be will not take from it, nor suffer his saithfulness to fail. Psalm 89.28. My mercy will I keep for him, and my Covenant shall stand fast with him. This therefore is that which David sleeth to in his last words, 2 Sam. 23.5. Although my house he not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlatting Covenant ordered in all things and sure. In this I say, the Union between Christ and his Spoule excellent, and hath the advantage of the union between a man and his wife. In that there may be a putting away, in this there can be none. The

gifts and calling of God are without repentance,

2. Secondly, In the marriage-union Death makes a defolution, Rom. 7. 2. If the huband be dead (faith the Apossle,) the wife is loofed from the law of her husband, but it is not so in this myssical Union. Death produceth the separation of the Soul from the Body, but not the separation of the Soul from Christ, nay, it doth but perfect the Union: the Soul by its separation from the Body is brought more near to Christ. The Spirit returneth (faith Solomon) to God: Hence the Apossle calls death ours, to our advantage, all on our side. Hence Saint Paul desireth to be dissolved and to be with Christ, Phil. 1. and we are after death said in a way of excellency to be with the Lord. And Rom. 8. 10, 11. while the Body dieth because of sin, the Spirit is alive, or life, because of righteons fuels. Thus I have now opened to you the nature of this myssical Union, so far as it is shadowed out by the Conjugal Union. I shall now make some short practical Application.

In the first place, this lets us see she moful store of on Unbeliever.

The Union between the Soul and Chais is not a notural, but a

conjugal Union. All conjugal union dependeth, as I faid before, ppon a covenant, to which each party doth affent. The affent to this covenant is that we call a faith a chufing of the Lord Christ, a refting upon bim, as a Saviour, and disping to him as our Lord. Hence follows, that every unbeliever, is a franger to Chrift, not united, yea that every one indeed is (as the Apolile faith) a child of wrath by nature; and thus the Scripture expresses the natural and unregenerate man, Eph. 2.11. Men without Chrift frangers to the covenant of promife, baving no bope; and without Ged in the world; and if the union between God and our Souls be but a conjugal union, this must be true; for what relation hath, what union is there between Husband and Wife, until the covenant of marriage makes it. So that every man flands highly concerned before he fnatcheth at a promise, or takes any incouragement in God, or builds up any hope to himself, to examine himself whether this Covenant be made. And what a miscrable thing this is to think of. If it be not done it is our own fault, 'tis not the virgins fault, (possibly) if the be not married to a good Husband; it may be fuch a one was never offered, or never offered himfelf to her : But it is the Souls fault, if it be not married to Christ, for Rev. 2. 20. Behold faith be, Istand at the door and knock, if any mon will open unto me; I will come and sup with bim and be with me: Sirs fee you to it. We that are Ministers are all witneffer against your Souls. We (as the Ambassadours of Heaven) have all in our Mafters name, and on our Mafters behalf made love unto your Souls. We have told you that our Lord is willing to be married, to be united to the meaneft of you; to the greatest finner amonest you; to the poorest filthiest Soul which stands before the Lord this day. The refusal lies at your doors. Now do you understand your own misery? do you know what it is not to be united in this Spiritual marriage to Christ? I will tellyou.

T. There is no medium between being one with Christ; and one with the Devil. A Virgin amongst you may have a good Husband offered her, and refuse him, and yet do well enough; the may meet with another, the may live a Virgin, and yet go to Heaven. Things virginity doth not (as the Papista pretend) more prefer a Soul to Heaven, so it doth not more subject a Soul to divine wrath, but it is not so as to this spiritual union. There's no getting to Heaven without Christ: He hath the keys of Heaven and Hell. It is he that hath eternal life given to him; he gives

eternal life to wbomfoever be pleafeth, he prepareth the manifons theres you have an ugly English saying, That the who dieth a Virgin first lead uper in Hell. Tis true only of the spiritual Virgin that is the Soul, that departs this world not married to Christ, not united to Chrift. I do not fay that Soul shall lead Aper; (I underfrand not that foolish phrase) but it shall have its portion in Hell. This it shall have at the Lords hand, it shall lie down in forrow. There is no middle between being one with Christ, and being one with the Devil. The Soul is a substance, incapable of a solute eflate; every Soul is married, and further married than to a Body; (that's but the case it moves in) every Soul is either one with Heaven or Hell, with God or the Devil; and may fay, either I am Christs and Christ is mine; or I am the Devils and the Devil is mine. Thefe are the two great Husbands of Souls; fome Souls have made a covenant with Heaven; Some have made a marriage-covenant with Hell, (it is the Prophets expression, your agreement with Hell, If. 28.18.) Observe the term, I faid, may fay. I do not mean is able fenfibly to fay; but only hath a true right to fay fo. There is many a Soul that is truly united to Christ; which it may be feeth it not, and fo is not able with comfort and fatisfaction to it felf to fav fo. A right to a thing is one thing, a fenfe of that right is another; and so on the other Stall, every Soul that really hath made no other agreement than with Hell, it may be will not fee it, is not fensible of it (as the witch or wizzard may be to whom the Devil hath appeared, and they have made a formal explicite bargain with them for their Souls.) But really it is fo, really there is an agreement betwixt a Soul with Christ, or with the Devil. Really every Soul is either its Beloved Christs, or its Beloved the Devils, and is not this a fad confideration? It is no more than you have out of the mouth of Christ himself, Fob. 3. 18, 36. He that believeth not is damned already, v. 26. The wrath of God abideth on bim; he was by nature a child of wrath, Epb. 2. 4. and he is under the abidings of this wrath. Some Souls are delivered from this wrath, believers were the children of wrath, but they are delivered from this wrath to come. Christ hath made them free from it, and, faith Christ, they are free indeed; but the unbeliever, as he was a Child of wrath by nature, fo faith Christ, the wrath of God abideth on him; he remains the Spoule of the Devil. The Devil was his beloved by nature, and he is his beloved fill. O dreadful flate!

Secondly, From the not being conjugally united to Christ, ewe things follow- a war available wen a cris

1. Thou haft no Istereft in Christs goods. 2. Christ bath no concern in thy Debts.

I fay first, Thou haft no Interest in Christs goods. Thou haft no pare nor portion in this matter, thou art in the gall of bisternefs, and in the bands of iniquity, faith the Apostle to Simon magus. The same may be faid to every unbelieving Soul, there is indeed a redeemer come unto Faceb, there is to us a fon born, a Saviour given, and it hath pleased the Father that in him should allfulness dwell, that of bis fulness we should receive grace for graces, there is grace in him, and glory to come by him; but what part hast thou in Fesse, what portion in the Son of David? what pretence haft thou to his merits, or to his grace? thou haft no natural relation to bim, there is no moral union betwint thy Soul and him; thou cantt lay no claim to him or any thing of his.

Hence Secondly, Christ hath no concern in thy debts, the husband hath a concern in the debts of his Wife, they are become his debts by vertue of his union with the Wife; but what hath the Husband to do with the debts of that momen to whom he flands in no natural relation, and with whom he hath no conjugal unions our debts are our fins, they all lye upon our own shoulders, if we have no Conjugal union with Christ. That man that is without Christ stands obliged in his debt of ten-thousand talents, he is bound to answer the justice of God for all the guilt he brought with him into the world, and for all that guilt which he hath contracted fince he first came into the world. Hence he is a Soul without hope, without hope of Pardon here, or Salvation hereafter. I mean while he continues in this estate, this is the portion of every Unbeliever, of every Soul that is not united to the Lord Jefus Christ. But I proceed in the Application.

How infinitely doth this commend the love of Christ to every truly 2. Ule. believing Soul? The Apostle faith, To those who believe be is pretious, and to be admired in all them that believe, 2 Theff. 1. 10. indeed Christ is many ways to be admired in believers, but for nothing more than for his love; nor is his love feen in any thing more than in this great miftery of the miffical conjugat union. That Christ should become incarnate, and unite the divine nature to the humane nature speaketh love, love in the father fending bim, Joh. 3. 16. Love in the Son coming; but this might have been, and we all have perished. The bypostatical union indeed, speaks a door of

Salvation

Salvation opened ; a way of mercy prepared, through, the vail of his flesh it is that we have a new and living way to the boly of bo lies, but the milical union only affareth us of an Intereft in this Saviour. The Hypoftatical union speaks Christ, a beloved, or an object fit to be our Beloved; but it is the Miffical union, that only Speaks to him, my or thy Beloved. Here's love in all its dimentions ; here's a heighth, and depth, and length, and breadth of Love, of love which when we have founded it with the best plummet we have, will be found a love past finding out, a Love passing knowledg; you cannot miss taking a scantling of it beyond your comprehensions, if you either contider, 1. Who this Christ was. 2. Or mbo this believer was or is.

1. If we look upon the Beloved, we find him, the Son of God The only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth, the brightness of bis Fathers glory. The express Image of his person; infinitely more above any of his Creatures, than the Heavens are above the Earth. God over all bleffed for ever, he in whom did all fulness dwell.

An infinite autarky, and felf-fufficiency to himfelf.

2. If we look upon the bride, the object of this love, we find her a creature, a piece of clay, in the hands of this potter, a worm. Her birth, and nativity of the land of Canasny ber Father an Amorite, her Mother an Hittite. We find her in the day of her Nativity ; with-Ezek. 16. 3,4. out a navel cut, not washed at all, not falted, not swalled, we fee none pitying ber; none having compassion on ber, we fee her cast out in the open field, to the loathing of her person; polluted in ber blood. Now for the fairest amongst men, for the chiefest of ten thousand to fix his eye upon such a poor wretch, for him to pals by her, and to look upon her, and to fay, behold thy time is a time of Love; to spread his Skirt over her, and to cover her nakedness; for the Lord to enter into a covenant with fuch a Soul, and to fay. Thou art become mine as Exek. 16. 8: for him to wash this Soul, this pittiful filly Soul, with his own blood to wash away her blood from her, and to anoint ber with Oil; to cloth her with broidered work and to shoe ber with a Badgers skins to gird ber about with fine linnen, and to cover ber with filk, to deck ber with ornaments; to put bracelets upon ber bands, and a chain upon ber neck. and a jewel upon the forebead, and cor-rings in her cars, and a beantiful crown upon ber bead, to deck ber with Gold and Silver, and make ber rayment of fine linnen and filk and broidered work, to give ber bis fine flower, and Honey and Oil, and to make ber exceeding beautiful.

beautiful: To make her comely through his comelinefs put upon her. Be aftonished. O Heavens! be amazed O Earth! No wonder if Angels defire to look into this miftery. It would be the only wonder (were not those bleffed Spirits fo confirm'd in goodness, that they are not capable of fo dirty a passion;) that they do not envy us, (as the Devils do.) For he in his hypostatical union, took not the nature of Angels, fo though the Angels are ever before him and never displeased him; yet he no-where speaketh himself united conjugally to Angels. Concerning Angels he never faid, I am married to you (faith the Lord) wonder no more, that Moles (though a great Prince should marry an Æthiopian, (an Ethiopian might be black but comely naturally.) That David, though the anointed King both of Ifrael and Judab, should fend to tell Abigal, (who thought her quality better fitted that of a maiden-servant in his royal house:) he desired to have her to be his wife. But O wonder at this that the eternal Son of God, thould ever fend a meffage to thine Soul thine, who wert worse than an Ethiopian, a child of wrath by nature. I say, that the eternal Son of God should send his Ministers, or his Spirit to tell thee, he defired thy beauty, that when thou refusedst him once & again, and faidft thou wouldft have none of him, thou hadft chosen thy lusts, and said after them I will go and didst go one after his drunkenness, another after her wantonness, a third after his covetoufness; he would not leave thee but sent thee letter after letter, and at last his Spirit, which would have no denial but finally conquered thy heart (thou knowest not how) and in the day of his power made thee willing to accept of him, and so thou becamest his: wonder not that God came and talkt with Abrabam, and Mofes and others, as a man talks with his friend; but wonder at this, that God should come a nd be united to a worm, that the Son of God should be married to a finful child of man. My expressions are too poor; had I the tongue of an Angel, I could not express it. My time is too thort, eternity will be too little to admire it, Pray, O Pray, that the Lord would increase your Paith ! that you may believe it; and proportion your love in the apprehension of it.

This speaks the great dignity, and unspeakable happiness of every 3. Use Soul, that can say unto Christ (without vanity) My Below

r. Her dignity. Amongst us the dignity of the Husband is communicated to the wife. If an Emperour marrieth a poor woman L 11 immediately

immediately upon her marriage the becomes an Empress. Such Honour have all the Lords Saints be they what they will, as to birth, or breeding, or any outward circumstance in the world; if they be believers they are the Lambs wife, and is this nothing unto you? feemeth it a light matter to you (faith David to the Servants of Saul communing with him about a marriage betwixt him and the Daughter of Saul) to be the Kings Son in-law, Seeing I am a poor man and lightly effeemed of? Seemeth it to you (poor Christians!) a little thing to be the Spoule of the Lord Jesus Christ, and Sons and Daughters to the great King of Kings, and Lord of Lords ? feeing it may be fome of you are (in the world) poorly and lightly effeemed? feemeth it to you a small thing, O you men of the world, that every true Christian is conjugally united to Christ? will not a Gentleman indure you to abuse his Lady, without taking revenge, and shall not the Lord take vengeance of those think you, that deride and abuse, those whom he hath dignified with an union to his only begotten Son?

2. But this is not an empty title of Honour, this notion speaks as much the believers bappiness as the believers duty. I shewed you their happiness, when I opened the Doctrine; but let me here again a little inlarge upon it practically. I will do it in three or

four particulars:

Davids Triumph, Pfal. 27. v. 1. contemplating God only under the notion of Light, Salvation, and the strength of his life. May not a believer say, the Lord Jesus is my Husband, the Almighty is united to me, what should I fear? of what shall I be a-fraid? certainly there is more with the believer, than can be against him: how easily could he call for more than ten legions of Angels, at any time to rescue his turtle-Dove out of the hands of her enemies? what is the worst that men or Devils can do? They can kill the body, and do no more; nor do they ever do that unless this great Bridegroom hath a mind that his Spouse should come home unto him.

2. What can they want? David, Psal. 23. 1. eyeth God but as his Shepheard; and presently he raiseth a conclusion of Faith: Ishall not mant. Shall not the sheep want while the Shepheard is able to supply them, and shall the Spouse want, the Wife want, while the Husband is able to supply her? Art thou asraid thou shalt want food and rayment, can the bride want this while her Bride-

groom.

groom is able to supply her? It is a poor exercise of faith for a believer to trust God for food sufficient for him? canst thou go to Christ and fay, My Lord, thy blood, thy merits, thy righteousness, thy grace, thy glow is mine; and canft thou not fay, Thy creatures are mine, mine for my necessary ufes ? Canst thou want eternal life when thou art made one with him who gives it to whom he pleafeth, and who hath the keys? canft thou want grace, when thou art united to him in whom all the fulness of grace dwells, and therefore dwells or fo dwells in him, that of his fulness thou mayest receive grace for grace!

3. Who shall lay any thing to thy charge? this is the Apostles question, Rom. 8. 33, 34. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of Gods eled, it is God that juftifieth, who is he that condemneth, it is Christ that died. If Christ be thine, thy Debts are his, his merits, his righteousness is thine. Doth thy heart condemn thee for thy fins, doth thy conscience fly in thy face, if thou canst but send it to Christ, if thou canst but say Christ is mine, the Writ must abate, the Action must be superseded: Doth the Devil arrest thee with an hour of temptation? Say nothing but, Satan, Christ is mine; and he hath done. All the arrests of conscience, all the condemnations of

Hell are taken off.

4. Laftly, Who shall separate thy Soul from the Love of Christ? This is also the Apostles great question, shall tribulation, or distress. or Famine, &c. no nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things prefent, nor things to come, nor beighth, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Tefus. Let me go a ftep further, nor fin: fin is a thing far more like to feparate the Soul from Christ than any thing else, but fin shall not; thou shalt not fin the fin wato death, fin shall not pluck thee out of the Lords bosome. Thou mayest fin, but he hath said I will heal your back-flidings thou shalt not lie and perish in thine iniquities. Now tell me whether we may not fay of all believers, bleffed are the men and women that are in such a case; yea bappy are the Souls that have the Lord for their Husbands. Certainly by this time, every Soul that hears me will think it felf concerned to enquire whether it be one of those who are thus conjugally united to Christ.

Let me therefore in the next place direct you how you may fa- 4. U/e. tisfy your Souls in this enquiry. It is a large subject and often falls in with our discourses. I shall not therefore further enlarge upon it, than the words of my Text will guide me. 1. If be be thy Beloved:

2. If thou canst say I am bis, thou mayest conclude this blessed union with thy Soul. Let me a little enlarge upon either of these.

1. I say first, if in truth thou canst say, Christ is thy Beloved, thou mayest conclude that he is thine. I say in truth; it is an easy thing to call Christ thy Beloved, but I say if in truth he be thy Beloved, he is most certainly thine, thou art most certainly united

to him. The reason of this lies here :

1. Because Christs word is out long fince; he hath long fince cried. Ho every one that thirfteth, come ye, &c. If any man will, let bim come. Now as amongst men, when the man hath made love to the woman, affoon as ever the hath but accepted, the may conclude the match made, if the man be certain : So the Lord Christ having offered himfelf unto poor creatures Souls, and fill fo offering himfelf, the Soul can no sooner consent to him and accept him, but the union is made with him, who is not as vain man that he should lye, nor as the Son of man that he should repent. Now though indeed, this confent, this accepttaion is properly the act of Faith; yet it cannot be without a concomitant love: And verily upon this I think a Christian may trust the whole weight of his Soul. No unbeliever loves Christ, no strangers can (more than in acomplement fay unto him,) faying unto him, My Beloved! Let that Soul fear nothing that can fay with Peter My Lord, thou that knowest all things, knowest that I love thee; and let no Soul fay, this is one obfcurity by another. Certainly we might if we would be ferious with our felves, we might by this determine the flate of our Souls when we cannot discern our Faith, we might discern our Love; Love is athing will not lie so concealed.

But 2. Observe it is not every love, which will intitle thee to call Christ, thy Beloved, it must be a primary Love. Simon Peter, saith Christ, lovest thou me more than these? suppose all the Kingdoms of the world were before thee: All the riches of the treasuries in it. All the Honours in the Air thereof, all the pleasures in the courts thereof, all the comforts and accommodations thereof. And Christ should say to the Soul, lovest thou me more than these? doest thou more desire me and a share in me than all these? hast thou more pleasure and delight in me and in my service than in all these? If thou wert to part with all these, or part with me, couldst thou let all these go, and take me alone, and make me thy portion? if thou cansit truly say, if thou couldest thou wouldst, or thou trustest

thou flouldeft, there is no doubt but thou loveft Chrift, yes and with the love due to a Beloved tos, and thou mayeft fay, my Belovved is mine. Thou art not to judg thy felf, from thy partial defertions, nor from thy forreign, no nor domestick temptations, much less from thy afflictions, or from thy failings; but from thy habituated love. A Christian may fay, Lord, Satan never leaves whispering me, that I am none of thine; but I love thee: My heart, my fensitive appetite is offering at the estrangement of my Soul from thee, but thou knowest I love thee. Lord, I cannot pray with that freedom, and life, I use to do; I cannot hear thy word with that sweetness, but yet I love thee ; yea and I love thee above ill things. I flew too much kindness sometimes to a vain luft, but by this I know I love thee more than it, for I am never quiet, till I have mourned for it. I never yet was troubled for too much communion with thee: But I faid before, this Love must not be in a complement. Love will not evaporate in a vain ceremony; it will not lie hid in ashes. It will flame fornetimes though the flame at another time may be choaked. It will be feen in its cleaving to every thing which hath Christs inscription upon it. The Soul that loves Christ, will love the Word, love Prayer, love Sabbaths, love the Saints, yea all those in whom there is any thing: of Christ.

Secondly, If thou canst truly say, I am bis; thou mayest say, my Beloved is mine. I may possibly in my sollowing discourses large upon this Subject discourse this more fully. I shall therefore only touch it here. This indeed is but the effect of the other; love is but the surrender of one Soul to another. The Souls giving up of it self to the object Beloved. The Apostle expounds it, 2 Cor. 8. 5. They gave up shemselves so the Lord first. The Soul that can say, my Beloved is mine, must be able to call it self his.

1. By afree and voluntary refignation, and purpose of beart.

2. By ordinary Obedience in action.

to I fay first by a free and voluntary resignation and purpose of bears. Thus the Church, Is. 26.34. O Lord our God, other Lords besides thee have had dominion over us; but by thee only will we make mention of thy name. The Apostle expressent it, Ad. 11.23. by this phrase; with full purpose of bears they would cleave unto the Lord, canst thou say this (Christian) that with sull purpose of bears thou cleavest unto the Lord state thy Soul is resolved for God, though in many things thou signess, yet with purpose of heart thou cleavest to the Lord.

And I

5. Ufe.

And Secondly, This full purpose of bears, will and must produce an ordinary obedience in action. The Bowl that is truly directed to its mark may be turned aside by a rub in the way, sometimes; but yet ordinarily it runs on toward the mark; the Bias, draweth again assoon as it hath past the rub and overcome the impression of it; it may be it comes short, or runs a little wide, but it will be there or thereabouts as we say. But I may (very probably) in this discourse have occasion to speak more fully to this, I therefore shall here add no more.

But in the last place let me press a word of Exhortati-

on.

First, To those who have not attained to this great happiness, That they would make it their business, that they might attain toit.

Secondly, To those who have attained it, that they would behave themselves (as those) betwint whom and the Lord Jesus Christ.

there is so near and strict an union.

1. Should not I prefume too well, of all particular persons in this great Congregation, if I should presume them all conjugally united, and made one with Christ? I fear I should; give me leave therefore supposing some yet strangers to God, and Christ, a little this day to plead with you. Bernard tell us of a threefold coming of Christ. The First, ad bomines, to men, in his Incarnation. The Second, in bomines, into men. The Third, contra bomines, against men. Christ is come unto men. The voice was long fince heard: To us a Son is born, to us a Child is given. This day many are pretending to rejoice for that. Nor have I any thing to fav against them, provided, 1. That they rejoice Spiritually, not carnally. 2. That they rejoice not in a vain frem, but indeed and in truth. 3. That they do not stickle to contend for that which no wife men ever yet contended for; that this is the day, the very day when Christ was born. 4. That they do not think themselves under a religious necessity of keeping such a particular day, 5. Or at least not condemn them. who can see no such obligation. I say supposing these things, what have I to do to judg another mans Servant? If any will keep this, or any other day to the Lord; to the Lord let him observe it. The Incarnation of Christ, is matter of great joy; we every day give God thanks for it 3, we every Lords day commemorate it, in his refurrection which was the act by which he perfected our redemption on earth; if any will fay, no, but we will keep a particu-

lar day in sense of this mercy: Let him enjoy his opinion (he may go to Heaven with it for ought I know) and let him be affured, that we want nothing but our Masters warrant, and we hould be in the same Zeal with them. But in the mean time (Brethren) as the Apostle faith in another cause, I will shew you a more excellent way : So give me leave to tell you, I will them you a more excellent cause of rejoycing. If you could rejoice that Christ is not only come unto the World, but into your bearts, this should be as to your particular Souls, a more abundant cause of rejoicing; you are rejoycing that Christ is born into the world; and if you do this well, that is, Spiritually, really, you do well : but what's all this to you, if this Christ be not formed in you, as the Apostle speaks, Gal. 4. 19. For this would I travel this day with you : Rejoice that the word was made flesh and dwelt among it us. But O rest not here! O rest not, till you be made partakers of the divine nature, till the word comes and dwelleth in your Souls. Rejoice that Christ was born of a moman; but O labour to find that you are born of God, by the power of the Holy Ghoft! It might be indeed, some little cause of rejoycing to a man to know that there is a woman born into the world, which might be his Spouse; and with whom if he could obtain her, he might live a long and happy life a but how imperfect would this joy be in comparison of the joy of an actual marriage to, and union with this person; and what other present effect would it have upon such a man, but to inflame himwith a defire to know this woman, and to enjoy her and have an actual union with her. What doth that Soul that knows that Christ is born into the world and rejoyceth for that, know and rejoice more for than this? That there is a door of Salvation opened, that there is a redeemer come unto the world; this knowledg will be thy great torment in Hell another day; if thou beeft not one of these redeemed ones; if iniquity be not turned away from thy Soul. O! then labour for this, that Christ and your Souls might make a match this day ! this would make the merrieft Christmas you ever yet lived; if Salvation might but come to your Souls this day. It is a customary time of feasting with you, with what joy might you eat your bread, with what a merry heart might you drink your Wine? with what a chearful heart might you call to your Neighbours, and fay, Let us eat and be merry; f you could but add, for my Soul was dead and is now alive, it was loft and is now found; it was out of Christ, but it is now in Christ. And .

And what hindreth my beloved Brethren? Is there any thing wanting but your own confent? This great Lord hath been thele many years making love to your Souls : God hath been by us faying to you, will you have my Son? Soul, will you have my Son for thy beloved busband? what wants here! but that thou shouldst fay, Lord I will? But if you do fay fo as once the Ifraelites Fof. 24. 23. you must expect that he should fay unto you as Tolbus there did, ver. 24. New therefore put away the strange gods which are amongst you, and encline your bearts unto the Lord God of Ifrael; here is all which the Lord requireth of you. Is there any arguments needful? Oh, how easie were it here to run through all Topieks! Arguing with you from the freetness of such a state from the profit and advantage of it; from the bonour of it, from the equity and reasonableness of it from the necessity &c. but I shall forbear. I know there is none of you but can eafily furnish himself with arguments. I shewed you the necessity of it before, and from that terrour of the Lord endeavoured to perswade you. I shall conclude this. branch of Application with Hamer and Sechems words with their people, to perswade their consent to a match between Sechem and Dinah Facobs daughter, Gen. 24.22. (Say they.) Shall not their cattel, and every beaft of theirs be ours, only let us confent unto them. and they will dwell with us. Christians, shall not the birth, the life, the death, the merits and righteousness, the grace, the strength, the comforts, the glory of Christ be yours? yea, and all that he hath shall it not be yours? only confent to him, and he will be vours.

2. Memb. Exh. In the last place (that I may shut up this discourse:) Let me apply my self unto those Souls betwixt mbom, and my Lord and Master, this mystical union is made, Their beloved is theirs. What manner of persons (Brethren) ought you to be in all boly conversation? You that were poor creatures little worth, born children of wrath, heirs of Hell: you that had not a rag to cover your nakedness, nor a friend in heaven or earth to take pity on you, that were without God, without Christ, without hope, strangers to the covenant of Promise, to be taken into this glorious state of union with the Son of God. But let me descend to mention some particular Engagements which this myssical Union layeth you under.

1. In the first place, it undoubtedly calleth to you for Humility. It is nonatural but a conjugat Union; if the Prince may have some rea-

fon for high thoughts who is of the Royal blood fielh of his fathers felh : yet firely that Queen hath none who was a flave a poor woman exalted to the dignity of a Oucen by meer favour, because the Prince had a delight in her : Christians, though grace hath made a great difference betwixt you and others; yet being Grace both madeit, where is boofting? furely it is excluded : it is the Apofiles argument for Humility ; for who maketh thee to differ from another ? and what haft thou which thou didft not receive? If thou didle receive it, why doest then glory as if thou hadft not received it? If thou wilt but look to the Rock from which thou wert bewen, and to the hole of the pit from whence thou wert digged thou wilt find thy heart was hewed out of the same quarrey where other flory beares lie: dig'd out of the fame clay-pit wherein other dirty Souls not vet made veffels of honour lie. Abigail had no reason to be proud though David had taken her for his Queen; nor Etber, though Aba-Gueroft had made her an Empress; Nor thou, O Christian ! though grace free and infinite grace, hath made theeconjugally one with him who is the Son of God, the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords. 2. In the second place; it undoubtedly calleth to you for a Reverential Love. It is the Apostles Precept, Epbef. 5.23. Let the wife fee that the reverenceth ber busband. Reverence is nothing but amful love; Love tempered with fear. The married Woman (let her quality be what it will) is bound to love her Husband; they are one flesh, and none yet ever bated bis own flesh, (faith the A-

postle:) But certainly the exalted Wife, the who by the peculiar love of her Husband to her, is raised to a state and dignity she could never have hoped for, hath yet an higher Obligation: As the conjugal Relation calleth for love on both hands, fo the fuperfority which the Law of that Relation hath given the husband over the wife, calls for a Reverence on the wives part. O. love ye the Lord all ye bis Saints! Love is a great General, and comprehends all acts of obedience. I shall here only restrain it to its first-workings in the heart; Let him be the object of your defires, of your delights and complacency, he is in himselfaltogether defireable let him be all your defire. I defire faith Paul to know nothing but

nothing above him. Delight thy felf also in the Lord, Pfalm 37. 4. in the meditation and contemplation of him; My meditation of him (faith David) shall be sweet. Delight to know his Will Pfalm 119.47, 70. and delight to do bis will, Pfalm 40.8. Mmm

Christ and him crucified; defire nothing in comparison with him, Palm'104.34.

2. Thirdly,

1. John 3. 1.

3. Thirdly, Obedience is undoubtedly the duty of the Wife; her husband is her Lord, Sarab obeyed her busband, and called bim Lord, 1 Pet. 3. 6. The Oneen is fo far (by her Relation) from being excused from her duty of Obedience, that she is doubly obliged to it, as the Kings subject, and as the Kings wife. All the Earth is obliged in obedience to Christ as he is their Maker; for by him the world was made, and without bim was nothing made that was made : but Believers have'a double-cord to tie them to their duty, not only as the Lords creatures, but as they are the Lords Spoule, in this conjugal union: should not the children obey their Father? you are the children of God. Bebold (faith the Apofile,) what manner of love is this that you fould be called the fons of God? Should not the Servants obey their Master? You know how ordinarily (in Scripture) Christians are called the Servants of God; should not the Wife be obedient to her Husband? You have heard there is a Conjugal union between Christ and your Souls. See here a three-fold Cord: Oh let it not be eafily broken!

4. Fourthly, It is certainly the Wives duty, to take what eare the can of all her Husbands concerns, both without doors and within, Christ hath a Family in the World his whole Church is his house, he hath concerns in every corner of the World : It is true, all his concerns are neither the proper, nor possible, care of every particular Christian : He hath Kings to be Nurfing-fathers, and Queens to he Nurfing-mothers; He hath Stewards to whom he hath committed his mysteries: But every particular Christian hath his work too. In fhort, any thing wherein (without going out of thy fphere and station, (for Christs Church is like an Army wherein rank and file must be kept:) thou mayest serve the interest of Christ, promove his honour and glory; commend thy Lord untoothers, bring others into a defire after him, a love and delight in him: I fay, all this, O Chriffian, is thy duty by vertue of this Union, but especially to look to thine own bouse. The Church which is in your houses, your Families your Children, your Servants, that in them there be no Enemies to the Lord, thy Husband; and yet more nearly thine own heart, that there be not a vain thought (if it may be,) nor a rebellious will, nor a whorish affection, nor a rebellious paffion : O keep thy beart with all diligence!

5. Fifthly, It is thy duty (by vertue of this Relation) to ab-

to have faid, That it was not enough for Cefars wife to be boneft, but the must not be suspected for dishonesty. I am sure it is not enough for the Spoule of Christ to abstain from apparent, gross, scandalous evil; but the must not be suspected for such things, she must abstain from all appearances of them. Finally (brethren) faith the Apostle, Phil. 4.8. What seever things are true, what seever things are boneft, what soever things are just, what soever things are pure; what soever things are lovely, what soever things are of good report; if there be any vertue, if there be any praise: Think on these

shings.

6. Lastly, The Wife certainly should be follieitous for nothing but to please her Husband, as (supposing her Husband a man of ability;) would it not be diffionourable to a great Prince, for his Queen to be continually melancholick and diffurb'd for fear the should want, or come to misery; or because the was in debt before the married him, or hath run into fome debt fince: What were this, but either, 1. To question ber burbands ability as not able to set her free, or not to reft in his love : not thinking him kind enough to fatisfie her debts, or to make a sufficient provision for her, that the Bayliffs shall have nothing to do with her. And is it (O thou believing Soul) no dishonour (thinkest thou) to the Lord Jesus Christ for thee towalk so heavily every day, to go mourning and refuse to be comforted, either in the sense of thy fins before this Union, or thy relapses fince? A due sence indeed becomes thee, but take heed of faying, thy husband will not pay thy debts, much less that he cannot: if he be thine all is paid, and thou shalt not want either grace here, or glory hereafter. Thou haft no care to take but only to please thy husband. If thou beett in debt, the Bayliff shall never come to thee; ler thy Soul rest both in his power and in his love. By this time I hear some Soul whispering: All this is true, if I did but know that my beloved were mine; but I do not know this. I should now come to shew you, That it may be known, the Spoule may arrive at an ability to fay, My beloved is mine, and I am his. But of this hereafter.

on bien ming wie have erneified in Sight to etere (, pentuly) forte anciegt tad entirent Cant.

h opposition to the Posith Lith of more affer.

Cant. 2. 16, 17:

My Beloved is mine, and I am bis, &c.

I Am now come to the second of those Propositions which I ob-

2. Prop.

The believing Soul may come to a capacity to fay, My beloved in mine, and I am his: yes, and to say this under some particular withdrawings of divine favour, with the same breath with which she says, Turn thou my Beloved, and he unto me as a Roe, or as a young Hart upon the mountains of Bether. She yet speaks and says considently, My beloved is mine, and I am his. Here are two parts in this Proposition, (or rather two Propositions put together.)

1. The believing Soul may come to be able to fay, My Beloved is

mine, and I am bis.

2. She may come to an ability to fay fo, even under some gradual withdrawings of her Beloveds presence; when at the same time she is praying, Turn my Beloved, and he unto me as a Roe, or as a young Hart, upon the Mountains of Bether: I shall handle them, and apply them jointly. I begin with the first, which I shall, 1. Open to you, 2. Then consirm and so pass to the second Branch: For the Explication of the first Branch take these three or four Conclusions.

. Concl.

Every truly believing Soul is not able to fay this, nay it is possible, that a true believer may go down to his grave not able to fay: My Beloved is mine, and I am his. It is one thing to have a truth of faith, another thing to have a fight of this faith, or the truth of it. They are two distinct gifts of the Spirit of God, Phil. 1. 29. To you it is given on the behalf of Christ to believe, and by the Spirit we know the things that are freely given us of God, I Cor. 2. 12. Now the latter is not given to every one. There may be one that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his servants, who may also trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God; who yet may walk in darkness and have no light, Is. 501 10. Faith is a direct vision of Christ, a looking upon him whom we have crucified: Sight is a restex vision. Therefore (possibly) some ancient and eminent Divines (in too much opposition to the Popish faith of mere affent

to the Proposition of the word) went too far on the other hand; in describing it by a full persuasion of the love of God in Christ to our Souls, which certainly must be the saich of a justified person, not strictly justifying saith; which is plainly described, Joh. 1. 12. To be a receiving of Christ, which is the Att of the will, opening it self and closing with the object. So that as it is undoubtedly true, that the person of the Mediator, is the primary and proper, and formal object of justifying saith (not the mere Proposition of the word) though the promise of the Gospel be the proximate object, in and through which the Soul receiveth Christ: So it is undoubtedly true, as to the Att of Faish, That the Soul may be in the exercise of is, though it be not able to discern its own operation, and the truth of it: Christ may be in the house and yet

be hid. And this is most eminently seen in three cases.

1. Where Christians are disadvantaged by dark, natural, melanebolick diftempers; these (as I have often told you) naturally dispose the mind to jealousies, fears and suspicions, according to the nature of those things, wherein Souls before these clouds have overspread them, have placed their great happiness; hence it is as natural for a Soul under them, whose defires have in health been after God; whose chief care hath been about their Salvation, and who have faid or defired in their health to fay , The Lord is my portion, under these distempers, to be jealous of the love of God, suspicious of the truth of their own grace, afraid of Gods wrath, oc. as it is for a poor covetous wretch, who hath fet his heart upon riches, and made his chief happiness to lie in his bags, when he is fallen under these dark clouds to be afraid every one should rob him; that he shall not have enough to live on he shall come to want than which nothing in daily experience is more ordinary. Now though God often bleffeth natural means to the removing these clouds, and when they are removed, the Soul returns to the enjoyment of its former light, or goeth on to a farther light; yet fometimes they are not removed to a Christians dying day, in which cases a Soul rarely is able to fay, My Beloved is mine: nor can it indeed be expected without a miraculous operation of God, (the cause remaining.) Some rare examples, I have, thought not known, yet been affured of by authors fufficiently credible of persons who have been many years under these distempers, and sad effects of them this way, refusing all manner of comfort, and being so far from being able to fay My beloved is mine, that they have concluded the quite

quite contrary, refusing all comfort; and being almost without hope, who on the sudden have had these clouds vanished, and been as full of comfort, as before of fear: but presently after God hath removed them to himself, only giving them a glimpse of glory before their death, but God is not to be tacked in his ways. I dare not limit God, by saying, thus he shall or will do by every

truly believing Soul.

2. This may happen in case of some great degree of desertion. Delection or Gods forfaking a true believing Soul is never total. (no more than we say the Eclipse of the Sun is) but as the Sun is variously Eclipsed as to degrees; so there are various degrees as well as various causes of Divine desertion : Now though as I shall in the sequele of this discourse shew you, There may be so remiss a degree of a Divine desertion, as the Soul may wrestle with by the firength of its faith, and yet fay, my Beloved is mine, and I am bis ; yet there may be some such degrees, though it hath a right to fay fo, (for every true believer hath fuch a right; yet it cannot be, and this must necessarily be where God so far hideth himself from a Soul, that it cannot live, in the view of its own fincerity, nor be perswaded of the truth of its own Sanctification; which that it fometimes happeneth, is evident to every experienced Christian; and these degrees of desertions do happen most ordinarily after the relapse of a Christian into some eminent fin. Some Divines question whether David ever attained to that degree of peace which he had, before his great failings in the matter of Vriab and Bathsheba. It is most certain, that it is a peculiar gift of God to a Soul, To fee the things freely given to it of God, or wrought in it by God and it is as certain, that it is fuch a gift of God, as is not absolutely neceffary to the Salvation of a Soul; and being not fo, it is confiftent enough both with the truth and justice of God, to deny unto the Soul fuch a view and reflection upon it felf, and if it wants that it is impossible (though yet the Soul may be its Beloveds; and its Beloved be her's, yet) that the thould fay, My Beloved is mine and I am bis.

Thirdly, it may and doth happen oftentimes in an bour of violent temptations. That Satan hath a natural power to make impressions upon our Spirits, either more immediately or mediately, cannot be denied; nor that God in wisdom, and justice doth fornetimes give unto him a commission much like that he had against Job, Bebold be is in thine band, only the eternal Salvation of his Soul thou shalt not hinder: such a commission being granted, the

Devil

Devil will not be wanting in his part, to fuggeft (and that importunately) black and dark thoughts unto it ; That it is no elect Veffel, no redeemed one, that it is an hypocrite, and all which it hath done, and doth do, is but hypocrify. Now befides that in fuch a case it is very nice and difficult for the Soul to diffinguish this fuggestion of its adversary, from the condemnation of his own heart; as in matters of calumny the politicians maxime is true, Fortiter calumniare, et aliquid adberebit; he that receives many and importunate calumnies of others, (though falle) will believe fomething of them: So it is here. It is hard for a Soul during fuch an hour of temptation, to receive such incessant and importunate suggestions and Impressions, but it will believe, or at least ftrongly fear fomething of them: Hence the truth of the first conclusion appeareth; That every truly believing Soul is not able to fay this, particularly Souls under melancholiek diftempers, under bigh defertions, under great temptations, can hardly fay it : and in regard that it is possible a Christian may die under some of thefe, I added, yea may go to his grave not being able to fay fo.

4. I might have added a fourth. Tis not ordinary for young beginners in the ways of God presently to say it. There must be a well-grown faith to restect assurance, and though often God gives some glimpses of joy and comfort to young Christians, yet usually ts Rara bora, brevia mora. I might shew you the exceeding reasonableness of this many ways, but it is not my proper discourse

here. I proceed therefore to a fecond Conclusion.

That the same believing Soul hath not at all times a power to say so. 2. Concl. This is so evident from the daily experience of Christians, that I should but abuse your patience to inlarge in the proof of it; though it might be abundantly justified to you from the Scriptural examples of David, of Job, of Heman, &cc. and the Prophet, Is. 50. 10. plainly supposeth one fearing the Lord, and obeying the voice of bit Scrvant; yet sisting in darkness and seeing no light; and upon view of what I said before, if you can suppose a Soul that hath once had assurance, and after sell into such melancholick distempers, or under a divine desertion, or under some high and eminent temptations, which certainly may be supposed, and hath been experienced in the case of very many Christians, this can remain a doubt to no Soul: Besides that though God by his covenant be obliged not to take away his holy Spirit from his Saints, not to dissolve

the union betwixt him and them; yet he is no way obliged not to make them in this life, fmart for their transgressions. Add to this that he hath a liberty to make trial of their faith and patience, &c. Hence it is that the same Child of God that one time can, by and by or hereaster (possibly) cannot say, My Beloved is mine and I am bit.

3. Concl.

But (thirdly) Every truly believing Soul, and that at all times, hath a right to fay fo. The reason is because it is so, every one may speak the truth, and glory in what is, though he may not glory in what is not. Now it is certain concerning every true believer, be is Christs, and Christ is bis; for faith is that grace by which the Soul is united unto Christ. This knowledg, this comfortable reflection is the light and joy of the Soul: now, faith the Pfalmift, light is fown for the righteons, and joy for the upright in heart, Pfal. 97.11. Every righteous man, every upright man, doth not reap light and joy; he is a child of light, but he may walk in darknels, and fee no light; he hath a reason of joy, but yet he may at present be in beaviness, great beavine fo through many afflictions, temptations, defertions; but he can never be in such a state, but he hath a right to say, my Beloved is mine, and I am bis : He hath a right to fay fo, because it is fo. He that believeth is passed from death to life, he hath an igustar, a right, a priviledg to be called the Son of God, Joh. 1. v. 12.

4. Concl.
Rhem. An.
1 Cor. 5. 9.

Fourthly, Many of the Children of God have attained to this, and more may attain it; it is a thing attainable in this life by a truly believing Soul: This the Church of Rome denieth. The Rhemilts call this a faith of Devils. The council of Trent, calls it a vain persuasion, and remote from all true piety. Bellarmine tells us that it cannot be had without a special revelation; we affirm it, and that upon the evidence of Scripture, reason and experience, which is all

the evidence can be had of any thing.

1. I shall make it evident from Scripture. 1. From the plain affertions of Scripture, Rom. 8. 15. yon bave received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father: The same Spirit heareth witness with our Spirits, that we are the children of God; how shall we say Abba Father, if we cannot know we are the children of God? how doth the Spirit witness if we be not capable of its testimony? the same Apostle saith, we have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear: and 1 Joh. 4. 18. where no sear is there is love made perfect, 1 Cor. 2. 9, 10, 11, 12. Eye bath not seen, nor bath ear beard, neither bath it entred into the heart of man,

the things which God bath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all shings, yea the deep things of God; for what man knoweth the things of a man save the Spirit of a man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God: That we might know the things that are freely given us of God. 1. The Scripture plainly afferts that God hath prepared inconceivable good for those that love God. 2. That none knows these things originally, but the Spirit of God. 3. That believers have received this Spirit of God. 4. That they have therefore received it, that they might know the things which are freely given them of God. Hence it is manifest that these things may be known, and that by every believer, for every believer hath received this Spirit of God.

Secondly, The promifes of Scripture make it as evident. I will not instance in all, take only two, Pfal. 50.23,.... To bim that ordereth his conversation aright, I will shew the Salvation of God; not only I will save him, but I will shew him my Salvation. I will not only save him, but he shall know that I will save him. I will shew him my Salvation. The other shall be that, Joh. 14.2 1. He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will sove him, and will manifest my self unto him: mark not only, I will sove him; but I will manifest my self unto him. To this might be added that Is. 32. 17. And the work of righteous ness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. Hence joy and peace are made the fruits of the Spirit, Gal. 5. 22. and peace with God; the fruit of justification. Rom. 5. 1.

we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God an house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens. Thus you see it is evident from Scripture.

2. Let us now use our Reason comparing Spiritual things with spiritual and fee if we cannot from thence also conclude it. If we cannot know this nor be able to fay thus; the reason must be either, 1. Because there is no such thing : Or, 2. Because the Lord bath not left us sufficient marks and signs to know it by: Or, 3. Because we are not able to apply thefe marks to ourfelves. For if they indeed be their Beloved's, and he theirs; and if God hath left them fuch notes, and marks by which they may know this thing that is; and if they have a power or may have a power to apply these marks, they certainly may know it, and be able to fay it. But, 1. The thing is. 2. God-bath left us sufficient marks. 3. They may apply these marks and know they have them. That it is so I have already shewed largely (in my former discourse;) proving, that there is an union, a conjugal union, between Chrift and every believing Soul. For the second, it is plain God hath left us notes and marks by which we may know this, you have heard this largely proved to you in this place: Again, what is the meaning of those Scriptures? 1 Job. 2. 14. We know we are translated from death to life, because we love the Brethren. I Joh, 4. 13. Hereby me know that be dwells in us, and we in him, because be hath given us bis Spirit. 10h. 14. 21. He that bath my commandments, and keepeth them. be it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest my felf to him: in short the Scripture is full (especially the New Testament) of such Texts, which make it evident, that God hath left us sufficient notes and marks by which we may attain to this; why fhould it not then be a knowledg attainable? The only reason can be affigned must be; because believers neither have, nor can have a sufficient power and ability particularly to apply these notes, to their own Souls. They cannot know then, that they love the Bretbren, nor that God bath given them the Spirit; nor that they keep or shall keep Gods commandments. But how then did Saint Paul (and believers in his time) know? how did Saint Fobs know? Again, doth not experience teach us, that we may know whether we love others yea or no? yea but fay they, how shall any one know, That he keeps Gods commondments; and that he shall continue to keep them? This dependeth pendeth upon a falfe supposition, that we must exactly sulfil the whole law of God. This indeed is not possible for us to do, and therefore cannot be known; but we are told God accepteth the will and sincerity of indeavour for this perfect performance; so that the only Question is, whether a Christian may not know, I. His sincerity, and willing mind. 2. That this shall abide and continue. That a Christian may know that he shall persevere, (God willing) I shall hereafter shew you: As to willingness and sincerity, certainly they may be known; what hinders but a Christian may know, whether he be truly willing in all things to obey God; and whether in his indeavours, he truly aimeth at the Honour and Glory of God; and hath not a squint-eye upon himself?

3. But Lastly, Experience proves it not only what we have upon record in Scripture, but what we have had, and daily have amongst our selves; Job & Pauls experience I shewed you before. Another could fay, We shall have a good dinner, though we have a sharp breakfast. The Martyr cryed out, O Augustine, be is come, be is come. As merry (faid Ann Askero) as one that is bound for Heaven ; the knew her port then. I doubt not but I fpeak to some whose perfonal experience maketh it good, and whose knowledg of the experiences of others in this case is not small. Let me only tell you of one Gentlewoman, upon her death-bed (and that not many doors from the place where we now are) who had made Holiness the business of her life, and made it a great part of her study to flore up comforts against the fear of death : She left an evidence of it in her closet when dead. I was with her very few hours before God took her, the declared both to me and others prefent, much of her joy and peace, and by and by observing me discourling of her (by her bed-fide) to one newly come in, and miftaking my words the pulls me towards her, and tells me the did not think I would have so wronged ber, telling such a person that she was full of fears and doubts of her eternal condition, (wherein the mistook me, for I said the clear contrary, adding that the bleffed God the had not the least fear of ber Salvation, and within two or three hours died, falling afleep in the Lord.) I will yet add one Conclufion more.

Lastly, Every Christian that is able to say, my Beloved is mine 5. Concl. and I am his, yet cannot say it with the same degree of joy and comfort.

Joy and peace, gradually differ, according to the degree of the evidence of the thing, which the Soul-rejoyceth in, and this even N n n 2

reason itself will dictate to us. Papifts will tell us that a man cannot know that he is the child of God, that his fins are pardoned, and that he shall be faved, but by special revelation, we deny that and upon just grounds, but that a man may know it by special revelation, we also fay. In short then, we say a Christian may know this;

1. By the more ordinary operations, and markings of the Spirit of

God.

2. By the more extraordinary impressions, and sealings of it.

Or if you will by a double fealing of the Spirit.

1. You know a featleaves the impression of its likeness upon the wan. So doth the Spirit of God feal Souls unto the day of redemption, by turning them into its likenels, leaving upon the Soul impressions of the love of God, impressions of Holiness, by which they may know they belong to God. Thus the Apostle says, be bath fent bis Spirit into our hearts, teaching us to cry Abba Father. By this me know we are translated from death to life, because we love the Breabren; from which impressions a Christian may raise a reasonable Conclusion, that be is bis beloveds, and his beloved is bis : and to make this knowledg, there is no more required than a more ordinary concurrence of the Spirit of God, inabling the Soul to abide in Christs love and giving it a view of its own state and fincerity.

Secondly, Aleal confirms a thing; and so the holy Spirit of God fometimes fealeth the gracious Soul, shining in upon it with an extraordinary light, witnessing with our Spirits, not only upholding our Spirits in their testimony, and inabling them to it; but adding fomething further of its own; withoffing with our Spirits. Now where this latter is there must necessarily be a greater overflowing of joy and peace, and inward confolation, such must the Martyrs have had; that thought the Fagots to burn them were but the Roses under their seet; and cryed out, O ye Papists; you look for miracles, and now you may fee a miracle, for in this fire I feel no more pain than if I were in a Bed of down; but it is to me as a Bed of Vol 3, p. 414. Rofes; without this Lourence Sounders could hardly have cried out, Iam in prison till I be in prison. Such an influence, must Mr. Robert Samuel have had when he faw one all in white standing before him, and ministring comfort thus, Samuel ! Samuel! be of good chear, and take a good beart unto thee, for after this day thou shalk never be bungry nor thirfly. But this is but the rare portion of some particular Souls And

2. Branch. Foxe's Martyrel., Vol. 2. p. 102. 2. 301.

And from this latter part of my discourse must be telebed the evidence of the second part of my Proposition; wherein I told you.

That a gracious Soul, may be abid thus to speak even under some partial withdrawings of her Beloved. The Spouse saith so here, yet the prays in the close; Turn my Beloved! and he unto me as a Ros, and as a young Hart upon the Mountains of Bether. Some translate it upon the Mountains of separation, but I shall discourse that term more hereafter; in the mean time I lay not the stress of this notion upon it, but upon the word Turn. She doth not desire her Beloved to turn from her, but turn to her; and if there were any need of that she was under a partial desertion, A total desertion, as I told you before cannot be. So much of the Lords presence with a gracious Soul shall always be as to maintain the union betwixt Christ and it: But a partial desertion may be,

1. As to the gradual influences of strengthening grace. The Soul shall not find so much strength and ability to Spiritual duties; to tread upon the neck of its corruptions. Iniquities, saith David, prevail against me, nor to the repelling of temptations as formerly. How often do we hear Christians thus complaining?

2. As to the influences of quickening grace. Though the Soul cannot complain for want of strength; yet it doth not find such life, such alacrity, such freedom and chearfulness of Spirit, as it formerly had; hence we hear Christians complaining of deadness of bears.

dulness, beaviness, &c.

3. As to the influences of comforting grace. The Soul lives, and that is all; it walks in the dark, and fees no light, it hath no inward joy. Now under a defertion of this third fort especially: It is yet possible for a Soul to say, my Beloved is mine, and I am his. The proof of it is evident from what I said before. For if the desertion extends not to that degree that the Soul cannot see its own sincerity, nor any fruits of the Spirit in it, that it is born again, that it loves the Brethren, that the Spirit dwells and works in it, nothing hinders. These being, as I proved before, marks by which it may know, and upon which it may say, My Beloved is mine, and I am his. But I have enlarged far enough, both in the explication and confirmation of this Proposition. Icome to the Application, which I shall bring all to two Heads.

1. Shewing you how far what you bave beard may ferve, either for the fetling of your Judgments in this point, so highly concerning all our Souls, or for our fatisfaction and comfort.

2. To quicken you all to labour for this capacity. That you may be able to fay, my Beloved is mine and I am his. I shall begin with the first, which I shall enlarge upon in some particulars.

1. Uje. 1. Branch.

First. This may let you see the falshood of the Doctrine of the Church of Rome, who deny that any fuch thing may be attained without a special Revelation; and the Arminians do very much Eclipse the comfort of Christians in it, by their Doctrine of the possibility of the Saints falling both totally and finally; if that be possible, the certainty of Christians can be very little, and must bevery incertain: But with the latter I shall have a fairer opportunity to discourse under the following Propositions, let me at present only deal with the other Adversaries of this great Truth. Ordinasily Truth is endangered by two extremes; and so it fareth with that portion of it under our present debate. Antinomians and some Anabaptifls, on the one hand, destroy the comforts of thousands of Souls, by afferting fenfe the priviledg of every justified Soul, and allowing no Faith, but that of evidence, which is a full persuafion of the love of God to our Souls. This defiroys the peace of all those poor Souls, who live by Faith, and not by fight, who fear the Lord and obey the voice of his Servant, yet walk in the dark and fee no light, trusting in the name of the Lord, and staying themselves upon their God; and this is doubtless the greatest number of Christians, even such as are Christians, not in name, not in word and in tongue only, but in deed and in truth? Besides that, I fear is a temptation to many to boaft beyond their line, and flatter themselves with unwarrantable prefumptions; instead of this well-grounded certainty. This is too much evidenced, by the lives of those which bear no proportion so much as to a good bope, (for he that hath such an hope, purifieth bimfelf as the Lord is pure, I Joh. 3.3.) much less to a full perswafion, which always obligeth a Soul to higher and stronger proportions of love, they continually being at loss, what to render to the Lord for fo great manifestations of himself unto their Souls. And as on this fide, these persons destroy the comfort of all Souls living meerly upon faith of adherence : So the Papifts would destroy all the comfort and peace of those Souls, that pretend to any faith of evidence. So that betwixt them both the comforts of all Christians are defeated. But how false this Doctrine of the Papifts is as well as pernicious to the consolation of Christians, I the wed you in opening the Doctrine; in vain do they urge. Ecc. 9.11. where

where the wife man doth not deny, that the love and favour of God may be known; but only that it can be known by what happeneth to us in this life. They urge that, Prov. 20.9. who can fay I bave made my beart clean, I am clean from fin? David (you know) faith, I bave cleanfed my beart, Pfal. 73. 13. neither is it neceffary in order to our certainty in this point, that we should be able to see our heart legally clean, much less that our felves have made it fuch; and though Saint Paul, I Cor. 4. 4. faith, that he knew nothing by bimfelf, yet he was not thereby justified; yet he doth not fay that be knew not that be was justified, but that thereby he was not justified; nor could he know that, for he hath abundantly testified that instification is not by the works of the lim. It is true we are commanded to work out our Sulvation, with fear and trembling, but Phil. 2, 12. furely that precept only excludeth vain presumption, and finful security, not boly boldness. But Secondly,

What you have heard may flew you the unwarrantableness of 2. Branch: those poor Souls dejections, who for want of this certainty will blot out their own names out of the book of life, and conclude themselves to have no relation unto God; what you have heard of the poffibility of gracious Souls, not being able to fay this; yea and of one and the same Soul not being able to say so at all times, may be sufficient to fatisfy you in this point; but why O Christian! shouldst thou be thus cast down? why should thy Soul be thus disquieted

within thee?

1. Consider eternal life, as in it felf, the gift of God; may I not have a true right unto a thing which is anothers gift, unless I know it, indeed my not knowing it spoils my joy, and the complacency of my Soul in it, but certainly it doth not fooil my right to it: many a man hath an estate given unto him, and shall certain-

ly possess it, who yet at present knows nothing of it.

2. But Secondly, Confider it as a gift to be attained by some all of ours as a means (fuch indeed it is.) A man hath no adhal right until be believeth; but may not a man be fometimes, unable to difcern the act of his own minds? Love is as discernible an affection and act of our mind as any other; but have you never feen any denying that they love their relations, or the Saints and Ministers of Christ, when yet every one that knows them fees the contrary by the effects of it? Every one knows, that a natural disease affecting. the head will so cloud the mind that it shall not discern the truth of its own acts. Our Interest in God dependeth upon regeneration

neration which is a true and real change of heart wrought in us ; not upon the discovery and manifestation of it to us; and from hence likewise will appear, the uncharitableness of any judgment paffed upon others, whom we see walking in the dark and seeing no light, or whose candle perhaps the Lord Suffereth to go out in obfenrity. Every one doth not bye down in forrow, whom God fuffers to go out of this world weeping. The hardest case of this nature is the case of such as lay violent hands upon themselves, under great terrors and diffurbances of mind, about their Spiritual effate, a fad and dreadful dispensation of providence (without all doubts) yet even (as to fuch) I think their former life is a better rule of judgment for us than their fad ends. I take the case of some such, to be no other than the case may be of one that in a great distraction upon an high Fever should kill himself for which to condemn them as felf-murtherers, were doubtlefsan hard and unjust judgment; because they truly knew not what they did, were not in the exercise of their reason; and so their action is in a great measure involuntary. I will not determine any thing in this case, but only leave it to Gods judgment. We must judg from the outward apearance; and that not from a fingle act, much less a single act that is the effect of a difease where the agent bath not the exercise of Reason.

3. Branch.

What you have heard may inform you of the mistakes of those, who judg they have not affurance; because (it may be) they have not that fuluels of joy and peace, which they have feen others have, and which perhaps themselves have had. Give me leave to tell you, that that affurance which is the effect of faith, argues the Brongest Faith, when it is least advantaged with fensible joy, and overflowings of divine confolations from more extraordinary influences: you have feen (faith our Saviour) therefore you have believed. bleffed dre they that have not feen and yet believed. I do take it to be one of the great mistakes of Christians, and that which much prejudiceth them in their comfortable walking with God; That there can be no affurance without a great degree of fenfible joy and confolation; doubtless there is an affurance, which is the proper and genuine effect of Faith; working upon Scripture-Foundations, and upon the evidence of an holy life. For example the Scripture faith, by this we know me are translated from death to life, if me love the Bretbren. Hence faith Faith, be that loves the Saints the children of God is translated from death to life. But I love the Brethren, I love the Children of God, all the Children of God; and because I see

the Image of God upon them, what should now hinder the Soul, from concluding Therefore I know I am branflared from death to dife? Here now is required no more than the ordinary concurrence of the Spirit of God, allifting the Soul to fee its own acts, and the fincerity of them; yet may this Soul be under great temptations. Nay, and it may be under some degrees of divine defertione, which may spoil its degrees of joy and peace. The Souls arguing for Gods Interest in itself, and for its own integrity, and to concluding well as to its flate, against these incumbrances of fenfe, doth not argue an incertainty, nor spoil its afforance. But yet they much hinder the Souls joy and fulnels of confolation. which must follow a further influence of the Spirit upon it, confidered as a comforter.

But (to flut up this discourse) you have heard, That it is 2. Uf. the right of every true believer to say, my Beloved is mine, and I

am bis; and you have heard further that it is that priviledg which many of the Children of God have attained, and which is attainable, in ordinary cases by every true believer : Let me plead with every one that heareth me this day, to make this their bulinels and great fludy. Arguments in the case cannot (certainly) be wanting to any intelligent Christian. He that understands, that be must one day die , and that he is under an ordination to Elernitys That when he dies (as to the world)then he enters into this Eternity, either of bappiness or misery. That the Eternal bappiness of a Soul depends upon bis union with Christ he cannot but in fome meafure judg this the highest concern of his life ; especially confidering,

The influence that this knowledg or captery, to lay to, hath upon a Christians confolation and chearful wilking with God. A truth of Faith is fosficient to Salvation; but fome light

of the truth of it is necessary to a Souls Conforation.

most The influence it hath upon a South befreel and glorifying of God: The Soul that is at forme certainty of its peace with God, cannot but look upon it left as under high obligations to lerve God; and indeed, where this artends not the Souls afforages or comforts, it is a certain fign of a militake, that the Soul cheats it felf with a dream : Bendes, there no Soul under fears and doubts can to gird up its Joins to ke duty, as that Soul fact is freed from thefe checking blog doth any Christian to honour God, at the free and chearful walking Christian. But this is so obvious to the meanisti capacity of the grations Soul that I need not emarge a 000

discourse

discourse apon it. I shall therefore only further give you my advice, and tell-you what a Christian may do in order to the bringing of himself into this capacity to say, my Beloved is mine, and I am

bir and that I shall do in feveral pasticulars.

First. Get a right notion of this certainty. I binted it to you before, that this is one great reason of Christians diffatisfactions; for want of this certainty is their millake concerning it. Do not expect that God should fend an Angel from Heaven to tell you your names are written in the book of Life. Nor that God should always fill the Sails of your Souls with the galar of divine Confolation. That man is certain, whose beart condemns bim not. He that can find a Proposition in the word (suppose that, 1 Job. 3.14. We know that we are paffed from death to life, because we love the Brethren,) and then can fay (and his heart condemns him not) -- I love the Brethren? this man now bath an affurance, he may fay, my Belaved is mine and I am bit; for where can the incertainty be? not in the Proposition, that is the letter of the word, which it is impossible should lie will you say in the Application of this word? But we must suppose, I. That the Soul doth truly love the Brethren. 2. That the Soul is by the Spirit of God upbeld to fee the fincerity of its own beart in this all; which being supposed, what hindereth the certainty? They are but rare cases, and extraordinary, when the Lord fills the Soul with feufible confelations that its state is demonstrable to it tanguam ex priorisevery Soul must not expect with Paul to be rapt into the third Heaven, and bear unatterable mords.

Secondly. Get a true notion of the advantage of the Covenant of grace: Christians misunderstanding this, or ignorance of it, or unbelief in it is a great cause of their incertainty in this great concern. The Scripture hath so evidently declared a possibility of a Christians knowledg of his Spiritual state and interest in Christ, from a change within our felves our louing the Brethren, doing Righteoufwell, receiving the Spirit, being born again, that the only flumblingblock a Christian can have is from his not-feeing fuch degrees of these habits and exercises of grace, as it may be he looks for and labours after. Now this miftake must proceed either from their total ignorance for from their milioderstanding, or not believing the terms of the Government of graces and that printipally in their things. and enterfil walking Chaifting, But this i

1. That upon it God exceptath the will for the deed. This is the

great

great indulgence of the Covenant of grace. Christ hath fatisfied, a Cor. 8. 12. he hath fulfilled the law perfectly, and so hath made way for his Rom. 7. 18. Father with fecurity to his justice to accept the fincere will, defire, and indeavours of believers for their perfect fulfilling the law: Now though it be true, That were Christians still under the Covenant of works (which in some sense is the case of all unbelievers) they could never be fatisfied of their Spiritual effate, because no man liveth, and finneth not against God; no man can say he is perfect : yet the Covenant of grace having provided for this; If a Christian can fee his Faith, if he be able to fee his fincerity, to fay with Pand, to will is prefent with me, If he be able to fee that he hath (through grace) thus far attained, and that wherein he hath not yet attained, he is fill preffing forward toward the mark; he may be certain of his Spiritual and of his eternal state, though he be very far from a legal Righteoufness.

2. That this Covenant is well-ordered and fure, (as David expreffeth it.) i. e. to ordered, that the errour and fallings of Gods people, shall not make the Cavenant on Gods part to fail; according to that, Pfal. 89. v. 31, 32, 33, 34. and that, Fer. 32. 40. I will make an everlafting covenant minh shem, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear into their bearts that they shall never depart from me. The feed of God shall abide in them; none shall pluck them out of the hands of Christ, Joh. 10. Arminiaus denying the perfeverance of Saints, leave Christians at great incertainties; and can at most allow them but a certainty for the present, and conditional But the Covenant is well-ordered and fure, and he must rightly understand this, that arriveth at this certainty of which I am now fpeaking.

Thirdly, Learn to diffinguish, betwint the language and fentence of a Soul diffurbed, and she sensence or testimony of a Soul not diffurb ed in the energie of its reason. This now is an hard lefton, for a Soul in the hour of its bodily difference to see this, and hardly to be expected; we use to say, that a disease once truly known is half cured, and truly fo it is in this case. The misery is this, that Christians cannot be made to fee the true caufe of their diftempers: When it hath pleafed God! in the course of his providence, either by, or (as it happens fometimes) without the use of means, to blow over that black Cloud of Melancholy, which hindered their Souls in their exercises of Reason; then they are able to lay with the Ffalmift, Pfal. 77. 10. This is mine infirmity. But while

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2 Con. 8. 32. Rom. 72 18.

while those Clouds remain, this is hard to them to discern ; however it will be good both for thole who possibly shall never be thus exercifed, (but may fee others that are) and for those who may fall under fo great a trial; to understand this. It is not to be expected, that a Christian under those natural distempers should be able to fay, Christ is mine, and I am bis, (it were almost a miracle if they (hould) for to fay this (as you have heard) requires an orderly working of our reason in a Soul, freed from the diffurbance of fears and jealousies, ariting from a natural eause, as well as a true Spiritual ground. The Soul working under these bodily diftempers, cannot freely exercise its reason in comparing Spiritual things with Spiritual; and therefore let the Minister of the Gofpel offer all the Promises of the Gospel to it, it can apply none; let him argue the goodness of its flate, from the most undeniable arguments of Scripture, he may filence fuch a Christian, but not relieve it, or at least only for a little moment : the reafon is because its fears, suspicions and jealousies, are the product of its bodily difease, thus influencing the mind, in a way of natural caudation: Although therefore in these cases, a discourse with faithful and able Ministers may be uleful for the present to relieve the Christian; yet the means God hath appointed for the cure of fuch diftempers, must be used, and prayer both for a bleffing upon fuch means, and for the upholding of fuch a Christian, that its present affliction may not over-whelm the Soul, nor Satan take advantage of it. These are the great things to be done, and the Christian must warily distinguish, betwist the language of the Soul at fuch a time and the true condemnings of a guilty Confcience.

Fourthly, A Christian must also distinguish warily, between the fentence of Satan, bow violently soever pronounced against him; and the sentence of his own conscience justly condemning. They are indeed but rare cases, where the Devil acteth singly, (he most ordinarily taketh advantage of those bodily distempers which I before mentioned, whence Melancholy is called Balneum Diaboli;) but some such cases may be, and it Christians be observant it will not be hard to them, to distinguish betwirt his clamours, and the true condemnings of their own Consciences. The Devil commonly argues either from what he knows not, or from what if true must destroy the whole tenour of the Gospel. He either tells the Soul, 1. It is reprobated, and not eleded: now how how came he to be of

Gods

How & Christian may attain to afference.

Gods secret Counsel? Or, 2. That it bath firmed the fin against the Holy Gooft. Now who can tell that fo long as there is an hour of life. left us to believe or to repent in? Or elfe, he layeth to our charge, the Sins of our Child-bood and youth; what we did before converfion or regeneration : Or Sins committed fince, but repented of ; and if these should condemn us, of what benefit were the Gospel, or Covenant of Grace to us? Our hearts can never truly condemnus. but it must be for fins we never repented of, or which we yet love, and live in. Again, he must distinguish betwixt motions to fin. meerly made to bis Soul but abhorred and rejected by it; and motions to fin rifing up in his Soul, or favoured and accepted by it. The first may be and oft are very troublesome and afflictive to a gracious Soul; but the latter only can defile a Soul, and ground a conclusion against the happy state of it. Hitherto I have offered directions ferving the Soul in this great concern by way of true Information, those which follow will refer more to pradice.

Fifthly, Wouldft thou be able to fay, my Beloved is mine and I am bis. O then findy to perfed bolinefs in the fear of the Lord! Sin is the only thing that can give the Soul a rub in its motion to this mark. Oh the vilenels of Sin! Afflictions, Temptations, Defertions, may hinder a Souls consolation. Sin hinders a Souls Salvation and Confolation too and nothing but fin can do it. It is a peculiar malignity in Sin; every wilful fin is a mote at least, if not a beam in the Souls eye; that it cannot fee Heaven its right and portion. Nav give me leave to tell you that the fame degree of Holinels, that will carry you to Heaven at last, will not carry you thicker in the view of it. The Apostle Speaks of Some that shall be faved, yet fo as through fire, I Cor. 3. 15. he that hath a truth of grace, but withal most failings, is he that shall be faved; yet so as through fire: but I fay the fame degree of Holinels that will carry thee to Heaven, will not carry thee thither in the view of it. You shall obferve (abating those in whom, as I faid before fears and fuspicions are but the product of a natural disease) those Christians that have most failings, have most fears; and indeed it must be so supposing a Christian to live in view of himself, and to have his eyes open; hence you shall observe, that Christians of great passions are most apt to these fears, and discomposures of Spirit, because of those many errors to which their exorbitant pathons berray them; commonly those who are of most even and composed Spirits, of fewell fewen words, and most reserved conversations from the world, live in greatest inward peace; and the reason is, because the sives of these Christians are most free from spots. Our ordinary evidence being to be setched from our close walking with God, and keeping his Commandments in reason, he that most strictly keepeth the Commandments of God, and walketh most closely with him, must have the clearest view of his Interest in him, and Union with him.

6. Live much in a just examination of thy self; you know it is a grave prease of the Apostle, 2 Cor. 13. 5. Examine your selves, prove your selves, whether you be in the Faith. Dld Christians but live up to this precept, we should have more of this certainty amongst Christians than we have; the Merchant that weekly casts up his Books, hath a reasonable certainty of his Estate, and knows what he is worth. Whereas he who either never doth it, or very rarely, can be at no great certainty: that Christian which often enters into his Closet, and there makes up his Books with God, will not also be at such incertainty as those who either neglect this or do it very seldom. Now the usefulness of this appears more ways than one.

Nibil magis certum quâm quod ex dubio certum est. 2. By this means a Christians doubts are often proposed, and often answered. We use to say that there is nothing we are more certain of, than what we have often doubted, and after doubting have been satisfied about it.

2. By this means a Christians good hope or erriainty is often confirmed unto bim; and so is less thaken in an hour of temp-

tation.

3. By this means the snarles of a Christians Soul are often evened, and his way made plain; for it is not to be imagined, that a Chrian should live in the practice of this self-examination; but as he finds the guilt of any new sin upon his Soul, he should be washing it out with his own tears, and a new Application of himself to the blood of Christ.

4. He who lives in the frequent practice of felf-exemination, will live in further watchfulness than others, who see not the temptations into which their Souls are every day ready to be led into. But I added a just examination, in opposition to an examination expanse on one part, examine on both sides, as well for thy self as against oby felf. This is the great error of Souls in their dark hours, when they are enough ordinarily in examining themselves.

How to attain affordace.

but they examine only on one fide, their whole buffress is so the what they can fay against their own Souls; they will hardly believe that God hath done any thing, in them, and for them. Do not only examine what habits of corruption have discovered themselves in thee, but also whether or no habits of special distinguishing grace have discovered themselves. There is no determination of the truth in a case without hearing both sides. Hear what thy heart can say for thee, as well as what it can say against thee.

Seventhly, Wouldst thou come to this certainty? to this ability to fay, my Beloved is mine, and I am bis. Be much then in applying thy beart to the promife; and learn to live much the life of Faith woon the promifes. Certainty, or affurance is nothing, but the flicking of the pramife to the Soul. The Soul is wounded, God hath prepared a plaifter for thefe wounds. That's the Blood of Chrift, this is the only falve; but this is spread upon the promises of the Golpel as the falve in the plaister is spread on the linnen. Now when this promife flicks to the Soul, when God applies ir fo as the Soul feeth its portion and interest in it, there's afference, there the Soul now is in a capacity to fay, My Beloved is mine, and I am bis. Now it is God that must make it to stick even to the heart that is clean, and prepared for it; but yet as a means on our part, as the Minister of the Golpel offers the promifes in the Golpel more generally to Souls fo it is the particular Soul's duty to be offering those promifes to itself, and inquiring of it self, why it thould not lay hold upon it. A Christian troubled for his back-slidings, and having his peace broken for them; and having humbled his Soul for them in fecret, should not fatisfy himself, by only reading that promise, Hofea 14. I will beat your back-flidings and love you freely; or hearing the Ministers of the Gospel in their Sermons, mention and offer that, and such-like promises; but when he is at home, when he is in his closet, and findeth his Soul fed and disquieted in the fense of his back-flidings, he should be offering that and fuch-like promifes to his Soul; and faying, why are show call down, O my Soul? why art thou fo difquieted within me? Here's a promife, why should not I trust in God ? and hope-that it shall yet praise him as the light of my countenance? the Chirurgion often applies his plaister to the wound, at length it flicks; Promites often offered to the Soul, at length flick too. I added the duty of a Christian, to live much the life of Faith upon the promifes. That is

w

to trust God upon his bare word; without a fign, without sensible evidences. I hinted to you before that there was no absolute need of an extraordinary Revelation, (as the council of Trent would have it) to bring a Soul to this particular certain-

8. Be much in bearing and reading the word of God. When Augustine was in his trouble, he heard a voice laying, Tolle et leges Take up and read, take up and read ; he took up his Bible and read that text of Scripture which brought him in peace. Many other instances of the experiences of Christians might be given, and a. God thus bleffeth casual reading often-times; so much more conflant reading. The Spirit in an hour of temptation bringing to mind some portions of Scripture, which we have formerly read. Hearing the word is another means, I mean observant hearing. God committioned his Prophets of old to Speak comfortably unto bis people; and he tells us, that he creates the fruit of the lips, Peace, Peace. Preaching is a great fruit, though not the only fruit of the lips : O wait at wildoms gate ! Lye at the pool of Bethelda; tis true at that Pool, thou mayeft lye long, if the Angel comes not down and ftirs the Pool, and rouls thy Soul in : But if thou

lyest there, thou art in the Angels way.

If. 57. 19.

9. Lafly, Be much in prayer (fecret prayer) and to all remember to add watching and waiting : Prayer is some of the fruit of the lips, which God creates, Peace. It is written that he gives bis boly Spirit unto them that ask bim : and that Spirit is the only comforter you know in these cases Prayer doth great things, this is not excluded. Only add to your Prayer, watching and waiting. There is a matching unto Prayer, when Christians gain a Praying-time from their fleep, or are watchful upon all opportunities to get an hour of Prayer. There is a matching in Prayer, which implieth the intention, action and fervency of the mind in the duty, and there is a wetching ofter Prayer; which David calls a looking up, Habbahek a getting up to his Watch-Tower to observe if the mercy were coming, or when it should come, all this watching is thy duty. This implieth waiting, God is a great Soveraign, and we must wait for him. It was the Churches good resolution, If. 8, 17.

I will mait upon bim that bideth bis face from the boufe of Jacob.

and I will look for him. s to viet sine duty of a

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My Beloved is mine, and I am bis. He feedeth amongst the Lil-

Until the day break, and the shadows sie away: turn my Beloved and be thou like a Roe and a young Hart, upon the Mountains of Bether.

Have done with the two first Propositions, which I concluded out of these words. I shall now go on to the third, observed from the order of the Spoules words; she says first, my Beloved is

mine, then I am bis. The Proposition is this.

Christ is first ours; then me are bis. I might possibly have Prop. flipt this Observation, if I had not been hinted it by other grave Interpreters, amongst which I find Bernard. I told you before that inflead of the Verb of which we supply reading it [is] my Beloved is mine, (and where there is an ellipfis, or want of a Verb, that is most usually understood.) he supplies the Verb intendit, as if the fenfe should be, my Beloved intends, or defigns for me, and I for bim, and justifieth it from Plat. 40. 1. I maited patiently for the Lord, and be inclined to me; and addeth, Sponfa recline logunta eft. the Spoule here speaketh better non pretendens meritum; fed pramittens beneficium, elfe preventum dilecti gratia confitens ; not firft mentioning her merit, but Gods mercy, and confessing her self prevented by the Favour of her Beloved; and this agreeth with 1 Job. 4. 10. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that be loved us, and fent bis Son, &c. and faith the Apostle, Rom. 11.34. Who bath first given unto bim? and it shall be recompensed to bim again, Pfal. 59. 10. The mercy of the Lord (faith David) Thall prevent me, Job. 15. 16. You have not chafen me, but I bave chofen you; irpon which Bernard gloffes, Nec ut te eligerem tus invent merits, fed preveni. I faw no merits in thee to make me chuse thee; but I prevented thee. To this agreeth that, Ezek 16.6. When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thy Blood, I said unto thee mben thon wert in thy Blood, live; yea I faid when thou mert in thy blood live thrice when then wert in the blood v. 8. I foread my skire over thre, and covered thy nakedness, yea I sware unto thee, &c. If. 65. V. 1, 2, 3. I am fought of them that asked not for me, I am found of

them that fought me not, I said behold me! behold me! unto a nation that was not called by my name, I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts, &cc. Osea 2. 19. I will betroth thee unto me for ever. God compareth himself to a lover, who moves first, he doth not say, thou shalt betroth thy self unto me, but I will betroth thee unto me; God moves first; but let me open this in a sew particulars.

1. Our Beloved is ours, first by an eternal election, Eph. 1. 4. He bath chofen us in him before the foundation of the world: this the Apolitic Rom. 9. 23. calleth a preparing before band unto glary; and illuftrating it by Gods choice of Facol and Efac v. 11. faith it was before the children were born, or had done good or evil: now when we are told that was before the foundation of the world before we have done good or evil, before we were born, it manifeftly gives the first parts in this love unto God , but Arminians and others have found out a way to clude this, and to give man a moving influence upon that Divine love which iffued from God, before the foundation of the world was laid, before me were born : God (fay they fore fam that fueb and futb perfons would believe repent and live an boly life, and to obeje shem to exernal life. According to this Doctrine, we chose God, he did not chuse us, we gave to him first, and his giving to us is but a recompence, of that which we first gave unto him. Befides, how should God foresee that this or that man Mould believe, repent, live holily, persevere if he had not first determined to to encline their wills, and change their hearts? if they fay man hath a power of himfelf to these things, what becomes of those Scriptures, which tell us; that it is given toman both to will and to do, of his good pleafure; that it is given to bim to believe, Phil. 1. 29. That no man cometh to the Son, but be whom the father draweth; That the way of man is not in himfelf : now if our believing, repenting, holy life, persevering, dependeth upon Gods. election, furely it could not be the caufe of it. Befides, the Scripture doth every-where mention Election as an all of grace, not of debt, Luk. 12.32. Eph. 1.11. This is a plain making Salvation, to depend upon our works as a meritorious cause, for what is Foith but a work? The Scripture tells us not that as mon y as God forefaw would believe, he ordained to eternal life, but de many as were ordained to life believed, ACL. 13. 48. and reckons up, Colling as a fruit of Predeftination, Rom, 8, 29. But I muft not cun out this

this discourse into the sull length, ketthis be sufficient to establish you against this dream of Election upon foreseen works: Electio, of perfonerum, non qualitatum, God choic persons not qualities, us, not ours, indeed we had nothing for him to chuse, but what he must

first give unto us.

Secondly, Our Beloved was first ours, by separation and donation. He was set apart for us, to be our Saviour, and we were given unto him. Thus he is called Rev. 13.8. The Lamb stain from the foundation of the world; that is, whom the Father determined should be stain, and who had consented to be stain: the Apostle Peter saith, 1 Pet. 1.20. he was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, hence he is called Gods elect, H. 42.1. the sirst-horn amongst many Bretheen, Rom. 8.29. and we are said to be chosen in him, Eph. 1.4. And as he was from evernity fore-ordained by the act of the Trinity, to be the head of the Body of the cleck, and to be their Saviour; so they were given unto him, Joh. 17.6. Thine they were then gavest them to me, and v. 12. those whom thou gavest me. By an evernal act. Christ was given to them, ordained for them, and they were given unto him as his people, by him to be

brought unto eternal fife. Thus he was first theirs.

Thirdly, He was theirs by an eternal Covenant, a flipulation made betwirt the eternal Father and the Son of his love; Christ covenanted on their parts, T. For the means of Redemption, and 2. For the means of Application. For the means of Redemption, that he for them would do what his Father required y that he would for them take flesh, and become the first-born amongst many Brethrents that in that flesh, perfonally united to the Divine mature, he would fuffer death, fhed blood, without which (fuch was the fuffice of God) there could be no remission. 2. For the means of Application, that they by grace derived from him, thould do whatfoever the Pathers will was as to them in order to Salvation; that they thould believe, repent, live, holly, perfevere to the end : and the Father coveranted with him, that doing these things they should obtain everlatting life, and Salvation of his grace; hence those phrases, I will give thee for a covenant for the people, 1f. 42. 6. If. 40.8. hence he is faid to be the furety of a better covenant. This is a third way by which our Beloved was ours before we were this. All this while we have been speaking, of such acts of grace, as we were wholly ignorant of when they were done's they were from eternity before we had any being, and therefore it was impossible

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we could have any influence poon them.

Fourthly, He is theirs by the Fathers gracions miffion of him and bis own meritorius laying down of his life for them, Joh. 3. 16. God fo loved the world, that be fent his only begotten Son, that who foever believeth in him might not perift, but have everlafting life; and himfelf faith, that he laid down bis tife for bis fheep, that his Blood was fhed for the remission of the fins of many; that he was theirs by a preparation of the means of Redemption, which we do not as Armimians think was for an incertain number, for he knew not whom: we do not think that Christ from eternity was Sponfor incerti faderis, a Surety of an incertain Covenant (by which we mean) for incertain and indefinite persons, nor a redeemer, an actual redeemer, of an incertain number of persons, but a certain number; even that number, and those persons, and those only, whom the Father had from eternity predeffinated, and whom the Father had given to him, and on whose behalf his Father and he had agreed in the eternal Covenan ; for these the Father sent him, for these he trode the wine-press of his Fathers wrath for these he died, buying them out of the hand of Divine Justice with a price; and thus he became theirs and they his. But this is not all.

5. He is first theirs, by preventing grace. This now concerns the means of Application, this gives the Soul an actual interest in him, and gives them the same in Christ; he is first theirs as to eternal Defignation, by an eternal Donation, by an eternal sipulation and engaging in an eternal Covenant as their Surety; by laying down his life for them : But I fay this is not all, he first moves in the Application of this purchased Redemption to them, he betrothed them, they do not betroth him; and this is that which Divines fay that the Soul in the first grace is meerly passive; God is found of those that feek him not, I have met with some that are very stiff in maintaining. That union with Christ is the first thing in special grace. I doube that, but the union of Christ by bis Spirit, to the Soul is doubtless the first thing. I take the union of the Soul to Christ, to be the product of the Spirits uniting it felf to the Soul. Or, (which it may be is clearer .) I think the Spirit worketh two ways in a to you had a his e

1. As a more forreign agent working upon the Soul, in order to its dwelling in it; thus it enlighteneth the mind, convinceth the Soul of fin, openeth the Soul, and makes it willing and able to receive the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. As a more domeftick Agent dwelling in the Soul, and actuating the Soul. Thus it worketh not until that moment when the Soul believing becomes one with Christ, and fo receiving the Spirit without which the Apostle, Rom. 8. determines it is not his: It Nempe at tant is the first that I am now speaking to. The Spirit, I say, and that magin gratial in a way of power first making the Soul willing before it is made pleasan fe prowilling. Thus actually God chufeth us first before we chuse bet, ein town him: we bring neither merit nor difposition to him. Bernard grain dearit ? upon my Text speaketh excellently as to this point; The Spoule lien illi partes (faith he) observe this order. That the might prove ber felf more adfribens & full of grace, giving the whole to grace, both the first, and the last ultimas. Alia-parts to otherwise bow could she be full of grace if what she had was quin, quonodo not of grace. Grace connot enter where merit hath taken up the place. gratia plena, fi -- If any thing (faith he) be in us of our own, to far must grace and not fit ex give place ; Deeft Gratia quicquid meritis deputas : Give what you gratia. Bernwill to merit, you take away fo much from divine Grace : I will have Ser. 67. v. pl no merit to fout out Grace. I abbor (faith he') whatfoever is if my own, to make me my own, &c. Grace makes me justificatum gratis, freely justified. O foolish Synagogue of the Jews, Gods old Spouse, which contemning the righteon nefs of God, would eft abith a righteonfnels of their own, and fo was not subject to Gods righteousnels, do. But let me a little shew you the evidence of this Troth, it shall be fhortly: because I remember I have lately spoke to you much tothe same purpose when I handled those words, Ver. 10. My Belaved Spake and fild unto me, Rife up my Love ! my fair one, ind come apray.

I. It appears from the operation and influence which the holy Scripture giveth unto God upon the beart, and will of min : What the Philosopher faith of the heart in a natural sense, is most true of it in a foiritual fente; It is the first that liver, and the last which deth; till the will be bent for God; till that moveth to him, there is no foiritual motion in the Soul. Now the Scripture every where giveth the change of the beart, and the motion of the will to good unto God. Phil. 2. 12. For it is God which worketh in you, both to will' and to do of his good pleasure. And Pfalm 110.2. The people shall be willing in the day of my power; He opened Lydis's beart, Acts 16. He gives the beart of flesh, Ezek. 26. 26. Certainly then the heart is an heart of flone till he maketh it an heart of fleft. Fis an uncircumsifed beare until he eireumeiferb it . It is an old heart until he mikes it a new-heart, it is that till he openeth it. Now if the first motions of the beart for God be from the work ob God upon

Et primas Si

the heart: if its first inclinations to good; if its openings to him must be from him, he must be on the forehand with the Soul, not the Soul with him; he must first by these workings shew himself bers, before the can shew her self to be bis, for the will is the great wheel of our Souls: till it move, the Soul moves not; if that move not till this divine Hand moves it, God must first give unto the Soul, and not the Soul unto him. If the Will did first move it self to God, then indeed it should give first unto God, and might expect a recompence from him: but if the will must be first moved, if that Iron-door will not (like that of Peter's Prison) sly open of it self: but the Lord must not only use his voice but as Cant. 5. 4, must also use the hand, putting it in by the hole of the door, (as he speaketh) it is manifest that God hath the first, yea, the great part in the Conversion of a Sinner, and bringing of a Soul into conjugal Union with himself.

2. It is plain from the Scriptures expression of the heart of man to be such as is not capable of spiritual motion till it first be moved. I remember I spake something sully to this before, and therefore shall but shortly mind you, That the Scripture speaks of us as dead in sin; from dead bodies no motion can be expected till the breath of life be breathed into them. 2. As weak and impotent, which denieth any Power and strength in us until it

be put into us. 3. As being at enmity with God.

3. This appeareth from this, That the very alis of believing and repenting are in Scripture mode the gift of God: not only the power and ability of the Soul to believe, which is wrought in the Soul by Gods influence upon the will inclining to him; but I say, the all of believing, its coming to Christ, actually receiving of him and closing with him, Phil. 1.29. To you it is given on the behalf of Christ to believe, not to be able to believe and to have a power, but to exert and put forth the act; this is a gift, a free gift of God, John 6.65. therefore I said unto you, That no man can come unto me except it were given him of my Father. Coming, significt hadinal believing; This must be given us of our Father which is in Heaven, and so concerning Repentance, 2 Tim. 2.5. If God give them Repentance, to the acknowledgment of the truth. If God will give them Repentance: not a meer power to repent if they will, but Repentance that is made the gift of God. Further yet,

4. Give me leave to use the same argument in the case, which the Apostle useth in the business of the justification of a Soul he-

fore God: As he faith of that to I fay of effectivel Vocationsif God had not, if we have in it the first parts, then me might have fomething mberrof to glory and book, which we cannot have before God. That the Lord hath a defign in the whole managery and accomplishment of the business of mans Salvation to take a way all cause or occasion of boating from man, so as he shall have nothing to do but to cry, Grace, Grace, is exceeding evident. In the contrivement of it, man could have no concern; The Decree of Election. the Covenant of Redemption, the Fathers Donation were acts of Eternity, in which it was impossible that the Creature (made long fince) (hould have any concern, other than to reap the benefit of them. Nor would it be dreamed till the Popills and Arminian ridiculous dream of faith & works forefeen which should move God to elect &c. was published to the World. In the bufiness of Redemption he hath told us Efay 62,2. I have trodden the Wineprefs alone. and of the people there was some with me : To exclude the Popilh penance and latisfactions, he faid upon the Crofs: All is finished. For the doctrine of Tuftification the Apossle speaketh plain, Rom. 2.27. Where is booking then? it is excluded; By what Lam? of works? no, but by the law of Faith. Again, Rom. 4. 2. If Abraham mere instified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God. The Apostle tells us, 1 Cor. 1.27. That God hath abofon the foolish things of the world to confound the wife, and the weak things of the world to confound those that are mighty, &c. verse 20, that no flesh should glory in bis prefence, 1 Cor. 4. 7. (which Text more particularly referreth to Vocation:) Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what boft thou which thou didft not receive? if thou didft receive it why doeft thoughory a if thou badit not received it ? Plainty. the Scope of Scripture tendeth to this. That God hath fo contrived, and fo managed the bufiness of mans Salvation, both as to the preparation and application of it, as that himself shall have all the honour of it; it shall be all of grace; and man shall have nothing to do, but by faith to accept it, and by baliness to thew his gratitude for it: but now this could not possibly be, if Gods grace did not prevent the Soul. The Soul should glory over Gods acts from Eternity, and fay, I had never been chosen to Salvation Christ had never covenanted with his Father for me ; the Father had never given me to Christ, Christ had never died more for me than for any Reprobate, but that God from all Eternity forefaw a goodness in my nature more than others; though others

thad the same Souls and faculties in them, the same wills; yet God forefaw I would use the liberty of my will better than they would use the liberty of theirs. And as to the application of Redemption, the poor wretched worm should glory over his Maker thus : I chose God firft, my heart first inclined to him ; Man then (it feems) hath made himfelf to differ, and (plainly) hath whereof to glery before God. Boasting is not excluded by Arminian law, but established. But this is clearly contrary to the whole scope of Scripture, and the revealed defign of God, as to the Salvation of man from the first contrivement of it from Eternity until its perfect Conformation. But I have enlarged far enough in the doctrinal part. I now come to the practical Application.

1. Ufe.

Bel. de gratia cap. 10. Concil. Trid. Seff.6. can.2. 4,000

This may ferve aright to inform your judgments in the truths of God, both against the Papists and Arminians. In the business of Election themselves are not agreed. The Rhemists tell us. That God eledeth none but with respect to their works. This is the same with the Arminian Dodrine of Eledion, from forefeen works. Their great Cardinal is of another mind; he grants that the people of God are elected freely, ante omnem operum pravisionem. But in the business of Effectual-Calling they are better agreed among themselves: for though the Council of Trent honestly anathematizeth those who shall say, that a man can repent, believe, bope, love &c. fo as the grace of Justification should be bestowed upon bim; yet in their very next Canon they do equally anathematize those. Who deny that the free-will of man moved, and excited by God, doth co operate with God, calling, agreeing to him calling, fo as be may dispose and prepare bimself for the grace of Justification; or that fay man cannot refift if be will, but is as a thing without life, and meerly paffive; with much more in the subsequent Canons. So that it is manifest, that by the help of the Spirit they mean only a common and general Influence, no way inclining the Soul, but leaving it to very near, if not full out, as much liberty as the Arminians plead for in the Will of man. You have heard that the case is quite otherwise; Our Beloved is first in his motions : He first chose us, stipulated for us: We were first given to him, bought by him; he first worketh in us, he first calleth, effectually calleth; he is first ours before we are bis: Indeed we first know we are his, before we can know he is ours. But our question is not, which is first known to us, but which is really first in it felf. Let this help to establish you in the great Doctrine of Free-Grace.

2. This notion of Truth informeth us, That whatfoever we are we are of Grace, Free Grace. Indeed grace Suppoleth freenels, ir cannot be Grace if it be not free. Augustine of old observed that we are not called vafa meritorum, Veffels of merit : but vafa misericordia, vessels of Mercy. Election is by the Apostle called Election of Grace, Rom. 11. 14. We were chosen not because we were holy, or because he saw we would be holy; but that we might be holy, that he might fanctifie us and fit us for himfelf; He chose us (faith Augustine) according to his own good will. not for our good will, which could never have been good if he did not subvenire, first work that it might be holy. He (in Effe-Qual Calling) faith unto us in our blood, live; year phile we are in our blood be faith unto us, live. Nay more than this : This Notion doth not only speak all our interest and hope in God, and relation to God to be of Grace, and if of Grace it must be free, and no way merited by us; but it also lets us see that it was of those works of God wherein he worketh, and none can let him. This is that which our Divines call, The irrefiftibility of Grace; a point which the Arminians most stiffy deny. They will grant us, that all good wrought in us is from Grace. (Pelagius himself would grant this; but he would understand no more than the free love of God in giving us fo good a will, fo good a Nature:) The Arminians will grant a little more than this: But all they will grant to Grace in this Point amounteth in the iffue to no more than a MORAL SUASION, that is, That God of his Grace or free Love hath not only created us reasonable Creatures, and indued us with a free will, that if we will, we may chuse the good as well as the evil : but also of further grace grants us the preaching of the Gospel, whereby we are persuaded to imbrace Tesus Christ, &c. but yet they will have a power left in man if he will to refift all the calls of the Gospel." To which purpose they tell us of those Texts that tell us of people's refilting, vexing, quenching the Spirit of God, Ads 7. 51. Ef y 63. 10. Epbef. 4. 30. 1 Thef. 5. 19 &c. Now we freely grant, That there are some common operations of the Spirit of God, as to which he may be refitted and nexed. And fecondly. That even those who are regenerated and effectually called, may Quench the boly Spirit in fome of its motions, and may grieve it by their back-flidings: But we fay, That in the Conversion of a Sinner unto God, there is such a power put forth by the boly Spirit of God, as that the creature is not able to refut; which 099

which in Scripture is called a being made willing, Pfalm 170. 2. a drawing : No man comes to the Son but he whom the Father draweth; yet when we fay this, we do not fay man is wrought upon like a flock or flone; but the will when it moveth, moveth of choice and freely, but it is God that giveth to will and to do. God puts forth an Almighty and irrefiftible power, to make the Soul willing to believe. and willing to repent; and then it willingly acteth in the ftrength of God, and believeth and repenteth. And indeed were not this true, our Beloved could not be first ours, but we must be first His. which is contrary to the Notion I have all this while been convincing you of. For observe, if God shewed forth his Grace no more than in creating us reasonable creatures, which even the Pelagians would grant, nor more than in allowing us the means of grace; and fuch a concurrence of the Spirit with those means, (as some fay,) that if men will they may believe, repent, &c. These are all still works without the Soul. The first work in, or from, the Soul, (notwithstanding all this) must proceed from the Soul, not from God, and the Soul should first be its Beloveds. In short, God should accept of mans good will first shewn, before any thing of God be declared to it or done for it, more than for many that perifh. This, I fay, were first to make us our Beloveds, and then him ours. But that I may come to a close. In the last place.

Let me thew you what duties on our part, this first special and effectual grace on Gods part calleth to us for; I will instance but

in three, with which I will closethis discourse.

1. In the first place, it calleth to all those who are made partakers of this Effectual-grace, for ever to admire the free-love of God to their Souls. It were an infinite work to flew you all that is admirable, in this particular emanation of Divine Love. The Heathen have reason to admire, and adore divine Goodness; For they are His generation , neither bath he left them without witnefs, giving them fruitful times and feafous; and the invisible things of God, even amongst them, are known by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godbead; but (as the Plalmift Spake of Gods antient Church, Pfalm 76. 1.) fo we may fay of the Christian Church, De Judsh is God known, his name is great in Ifrael; In Salem alfo is his Tabernacle, and bis dwelling place in Sion, In the Chriflian-Church is God known, his Name is great among Christians. Amongst Christians only is Christ preached, to them the Gospel is gone forth : The Heathen hear not of him who was lifted up, as the brazen

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braten Serpent was lifted up in the Wilderneft. They hear not of a Christ preached; But above all persons in the World , the Chriflian, that is not one in name only, the real Christian; the Christian united to Christ hath reason to adore Divine Grace. Christ knocked at others doors, he waited at others doors as well as theirs: but these alone are they concerning whom he was pleased to put: in bis band by the bole of the door : They had else suffered their Lord as well as others to stand while his locks were wet with the dew of the night; And why you, O Christians? What was there in your circumstances more than others? what in your bloud more than theirs, in your good-will more than theirs? What made you to differ? it may be they came to the fame Sermon, fat in: the same Seat, heard the same Words, to be fore they had equally rational Souls with you: yet went away it may be mocking if not fo, yet not affected, not moved, not melted in their native hardness; only your heart was broken, you were touched melted, persuaded to imbrace Christ offered, to change your course of life; what was this but the Lordsdoing? Oh let it for ever bemarvellons in your eyes! Think, and fay with your felves, Lord, why are? How! why came the Spirit of the Lord more to me. than another, and cease admiration if you can; find the bottom of this Love if you can.

2. Secondly, This Notion calls loudly to all Christians for bumility, a walking humbly before God and before men: It is certainly one of the absurdest things in the World to be proud of Grace. There is indeed a rejoycing, a glorying in the free-grace and love of God; but Pride is an bigh opinion of our selves, for something in, or from our felves, I Cor. 4. 7. Who maketh thee to differ from another ? and what hast thou which thou didst not receive? and if thou didft receive it, why doeft thou glory, as if thou hadft not received it ? thou haft no reason to boast towards God; he hath excluded boafting, by giving thee to will, giving thee to believe. Thou hast no reason to Triumph over thy unregenerate Brother : thou hadft been as far from Christ as he if God had not began with thee; if he had not first faid to thee, Thou that be mine; Though thou to this day hadft never faid to him, Lord, I will be thine : He chose thee, thou didst not chuse him; O therefore pity unconverted Souls, pity them ! pray for those Sisters that have no breafts : fay to God, Lord, what shall we do for them? but boats

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not overthem; Triumph not over any, but Triumph and rejoice

in the Lord what thou wile.

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2. Laftly, You may from hence eafily conclude, how much every converted Soul is in point of gratitude obliged to be the Lords : The Lord's every fuch Soul is in point of Union; Whether (faith the Apossle) we live or dye we are the Lords , but that is not my meaning here; but to be bis in the dedication, fefignation, and giving up of our felves to be the Lords. Should not the Wife love the Husband, live with him, be obedient to him, mind his concerns in the World? but certainly, the is the more obliged to it by how much the is more preferred in her Union with him, and more happy in the enjoyment of him? O love ye the Lord all ye his Saints! O live in firicest communion with him! O never think you can do enough for this Beloved, who took you from the brink of Hell when you were wallowing in your blood, when you thought not of God, moved not towards God, and would take no nay at your hands, but faid of your Souls, They shall be mine. Infinite are the arguments might be used, but it is you know a Subject which often occurreth: and I shall spend my next Exercise upon one great Argument; Though Christ be ours before me be bis, yet me must first know me are bit, before me can know that be is ours.

es placedary, when storing callered over al Clarking of Colors, we shall be supplied to the care care and a storing another the care in the World and a storing of the care in the World and a storing of the care in the world and a storing of the care an

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he like the that did not that hims Other foredity uponyer desils, ply than I gray for thole Sweet the have-no brene ! sweet od, both what half we do for them? but both

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The faster is that which I increase our firster a word oct we unmira becaused that a Cant 2, 16, 17, but or very first or

My Beloved is mine, and I am bis , He feedeth among the Lillies.

N my last Exercise I discoursed concerning the order of Gods Operation in the business of mans Conversion There we gave God the honour of the first work : He maketh Love to us first; he first chuseth, and that not only by eternal Election, but having the first and greatest work in effectual Vocation the is ours. before we are his : but the case is otherwise concerning the order of our sense and knowledg; we do not first know that he is ours, but that we are his, and by our knowledg that we are bis, and that he feedeth among ft the Lillies; we come to know that be is ours, or at least we cannot know the former, but at the same time we must have some evidence of the latter: Christ first chuseth the Soul, then the Soul from a free act of its own, acting as a reasonable creature chuseth and accepteth him, and the Soul at the same time may speak both together: It cannot say, my Beloved is mine before it can fay, I am bis. And hence it followeth, that the cannot know that Christ is hers, before the knoweth that the is his; and this the may know, because be feedeth amongst the Lillies. Take the Propolition thus:

No Soul can be able to fay Chrift is mine, before it be able to fay I Prop.

I am bis, be feedeth amongst the Lillies.

You fee the Spoule speaketh both with the same breath. I I will speak to this Propolition, 1. By way of Explication, 2. By way of Confirmation. Lastly, By way of Application. By way of Explication, I shall only shew you in what sense I here understand Mine, and his: They are both particles of speech, by which we fignify Poffession, Relation and Interest. Now, to fay nothing of the General Relation which all creatures have to God, there is a double Relation which men and women may have to Christ as Mediatour; for as he is Mediatour, we may confider him either as bead of the whole visible Church, or of his Eled which we call the Church invisible.

1. The first I may call Professional and Ecclesiastical The fecond Spiritual and Real, and he Send bush girt fire 210 The latter is that which I intend; but fuffer a word or two up-

on the former :

1. Christ may be faid to be theirs whom he hath separated from the Pagan-world into a Church-state, to whom he hath committed his Oracles, fent his Gospel, granted his Ordinances: In this fense I take those Texts, Gal. 3.27. As many as have been baptized into Chrift. Rom. 6. 3. As many as were baptized into Fefus Chrift were baptized into his death. Baptism and outward Profession in a fense make Chrift ours, and w bis : in which sense there is nothing more evident than that God calls the whole Nation of Ifrael bis, and all their Children his -- my Children: every one will understand how a people thus enrolled in Gods Register, and by outward Profession given up to God, and by the Lord so far owned. as that he fends Ministers as his Embassadours to entreat them to be reconciled to God, grants them his Gospel, exerciseth them under the cares of a more special Providence, stands nearlier related to Christ than Pagans that never heard of Christ, or having heard of him, mock and blafpheme him! Now the Proposition is true in this sense; men can pretend no Relation Christ standeth in to them, without fome giving up of themselves unto him proportion'd to fuch a Relation. Pagans can claim nothing in Christ. they cannot call him their Head, their Savlour; But persons who in Baptifm have been dedicated to Christ, or who by an outward. profeshon own Christ, and have given up their names to him, and call themselves by his Name, they may say be is theire; that is, so far theirs, as they are his: But this is not that I intend, though by many this is made enough. It may in this sence be said of many, that Chrift is theirs, and they are his, who yet may perith for ever. The Evangelit faith, Christ came amongst his own, John to 11. He came amongst bis own, and they received him not : bis own and yet they were Unbelievers, and to not capable of Salvation in that flate. But yet I fay, before men can lay any claim to Christ. they must be able to fay, they are bis in a proportionable sense as to to which they lay and make that claim to him.

2. But fecondly, There is a far other and nearer Relation which a Soul may have to Christ and he to it, as he is the bead of the Elect, and of Believers. This I called Spiritual and real; indeed the other had a proportionable reality in it. Christ is a real head to the whole visible Church: but this is that Relation to Christ, which alone will truly stand the Soul in stead; this is that which is the con-

jugal.

ter his.

jugal milin, or refulteth from it. The other relation of Cliris to us and us to him, fignifies little or nothing, but as a means in order unto this. Christ is no-where faid to be married to an unbelieving Soul, or to be in an unbelieving Soul; he is faid indeed to be betrothed to his Church; (which confists of believers and unbelievers:) to all these he hath a relation, to the true Believer, a conjugal Relation: but till the Soul be spiritually united to bim, he never is its, nor it never is his by a conjugal Relation. Now thus a Soul becometh his,

1. By a cordial acceptation of bim in bis Gofpel, offers of bimfelf un-

2. By an actual pursuit of that acceptation, and furrender of it-felf unto Christ in obedience to his Commands, and devoting of it felf

unto bis fervice. 1. I fay first, By a cordial acceptation of bim in bis Gofpel-offers of himself unto him. This the Scripture calls a Receiving of Christ, a being willing, a laving bold on the Lords Covenant. Christ (in the preaching of the Golpel) cometh as a Wover to every one of your Souls. The Apofile, you know, fileth us Minifters, 2 Cm 50 20. We are Enchaffedours for Christ, as though God did befeech you by is. me pray you in Christs stead be reconciled unto God. Indeed in the perfecting of this Union, he wieth another emraordinary Inframent, that is, his most holy Spirit, to whom the honour of this work belongeth; 'tis he who putterb in his hand bythe bole of the door : Paul planes; and Apollos masereth, but he it is that giveth the encrease. We bring the Gospel-forces before the City, but herketh is ; we are the leiger Embaffadours , he is the extraordinary Envoy that comes with a special Commission to this or that Soul. But yet the Soul acteth freely, and out of choice as a rational Agent; the Wheel moves which ought to move first in all rational Agents as to all rational acts, (I mean the will,) but the Spirit is the wheel within the wheel. The Soul becomes willing. bus how it comes to be willing it doth not know, but cryes out Grace, Grace; This is the Lords doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. And that this may not feem frange to you , it is but correspondent to a more common work of God in ordinary matriages between men and women : Have you never known alty Woman that hath been follicited in marriage, and it may be hath received the motion, the first motions carelesty or contemptuous ly; vet it may be the hath known as much of the man, behen as after, and her Friends have as much perfuaded her at first, as at last. At last her will enclineth, the knoweth not which way, but enclined it is, and doubtles by the secret work of Gods Providence influencing, her will, and making her willing to, and desirous of that button, the first motion to which the received with slight carelesness, and perhaps contempts. But to return, This inclination of the will must be before the Soul can be said to be Christs in this Spiritual Scale. Christ must full have been at work with the Soul making it willing, but it must be willing; it must receive Christ, and with purpose of heart give up itself to the Lord before it becomes his. The Prophet, Isaiab 56.6. calleth it, A joining of our selves to the Lord, and taking bold of his Covenant. The Souls consent to be the Lords, is nenessary to make it his.

2. Nor will a meer verbal confent do it , There must be an actual pursuit of this confent to, and acceptation of the Lord Felus by obedience to his Commands, and a devoting of our felves to his Service. The Soul must intend and delign for Christ, (as I told you Bernard interprets this Text.) The Prophet Ilaiab excellently expounds it, Elsy 56.6. by a ferving of God, a loving the name of the Lord to be his fervant, keeping his Sabbath, (a species of worthip put for the whole: Ver. 4. a chufing the things that pleafe God. That person is said to be anothers that gives up him, or her felf to the fervice, devotion and interest of another : And in this sense the Soul must be able to fay, I am bis, before it can fay, My Beloved is mine. Not that the Soul-must be able to read perfection in its heart or life, but that the bent and scope, and design of its heart is for the Lord; that it hath chosen the way of the Lord, and ordinarily walketh in it, though fometimes through ignorance or errour by temptation it is drawn afide though fometimes through weakness it flumbles and falleth: as who lives & finneth not against God ? The righteous man falls feven-times a-day : though the Soul (as Saint Paul expresseth it, Rom. 7.) fometimes cannot do what it would, and doth do the things it would not. In this sence, I fay the Soul must be able to fay, I am bis, before or assoon as it can fay, my Beloved is mings in truth and without vanity. Christ in the order of things it first ours before we are bis; he loveth us first, he gives to us first. But in the order of our knowledg we cannot difeern, we cannot comfortably conclude, that Christ is ours. until we discern, and be able in some measure to conclude that we are his. Now

No are demonstration of shistereth, will not be difficult from reflecting upon sets to be a had occasion in the handling of this Verse inforce to tall you size. That there are but two ways imaginable, by which a food may topos to know its interest in Chail. The one from the many extraordinary restimony of the Spirit, for (fatth the Apostle,) a Gorant 12. The things of God quotests no man has by the Spirit of God, 12. By the more ordinary operation of the Spirit, apholding the Soul to the difference the or sub of its grace, which as a proper offest most certainly declareth the cause. I shall castly prove to you, that unless the Soul first, or at the fame time knows, and to able to say that it is Christs, it can never say, Christis mine.

For first, Can it be imagined that the Spirit of Christ by any textraordinary witness should sessify Christs love, and an actual interest in Christ, unto that Sould hat is yet mentiling and dispeditures; that is yet in a state of oribelles, that hath not yet much so as a willing mind to walk with God, to serve and obey him; it may indeed thus help a Soul, troubled at its own imperfect walkings with God, and in some fit of melancholly, or under some temptation, or from some mistake be concluding sally against itself a but it so thelps the Soul at the same time shewing in its mistake, not persuading it of an interest in Christ, though it be in a state of unbelief and impenitency. At the same time that it takes away the Souls sadnesses and its heart-aking, and trouble upon this account, it must also take away its own heart-condemnings

22. Shall the Soul be able torfay, my Beloved is mine, concluding from the effects to the cause, the Spirit of God in the mean time only in an ordinary course affisting it to see the truth of its grace; then the Proposition is plain; for all such evidences must be tetched from the proper effects, which nothing but such causes can produce. For Emergia, we may conclude that; This body breatheth, or bath sense; therefore the Soul is mot yet depasted from it; and the conclusion is good, because the Soul is the only thing that can cause respiration or sense in the Body. But we cannot conclude thus; This Body hath warmth in it, therefore the Soul is not depasted from it; because experience tells us, that the warmth may for a time be continued in a dead body, by the heat caused by the disease, that divided the Soul from it, or from a fire, or clouds, &c.

Now, there is no other proper effects of a Conjugal union of the

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Soul

Sont with Christ, than what I have cold you. The Souls acceptation of Christ and consent to him so it Series and Lord, and giving up it self sincerely to his service and takered. The Solpture will tell you that Hood heard John Book stilly, and dil mony bings, that a Pagan was almost perfected to be a Christian, and another trembled hearing Saint Book discouring of the last Judgment. That a pack of Hyperites, yet fingle God daily presented to delight to know his ways, as a people that did right to have his ways, as a people that did right to make of Jake not the ardinances of God, but asks of his she ordinances of Jakies, and took delight in approaching to God. That another or the same company of Hypocrites, IS.48, were called by the name of Israel, and were come forth out of the waters of Judah, and sware by the name of the Lord, and made mention of the God of Israel, (but me in truth nor in righteonsness) yet called themselves of the boty City, and stayed themselves upon the God of Israel, but it no-where telleth you that any such persons, joined themselves to the Lord, took hold of his covenant, received the Lord Jesus Christ, chese the things be delighted in, to love the Lord, and to serve him.

Again we may argue thus, Every Soul that arrived at this bleffed capacity to fay, my Beloved is mine, must (reflecting upon it felf) at the same time be able either to fay, I am bis, or in Such a cafe that it faith, I am not bir, On thirdly I do not know, whether I be bis or no. If at the fame time it can fay, I am bis, that is that which I am pleading for. If at that time it be in such a condition as it fays, I am none of Chrifts. I never believed in him I never accepted or received him, I never gave up my felf to him, &c. I appeal to the reason of every Christian, how at that time it can fay, my Beloved is mine; mistake me not, the Emphasis lies in those terms, how it can fay, I do believe Christ may be the portion of many a Soul, that fo darkly concludeth against it fells but I fay it is impossible it should fay fo. There is a reciprocation in all true and real relations, can any Wife fay, my Husband is mine, and not fay, I am bir ? Can any of us fay, fuch a one is my Father, and at the same time say, I am none of his Child ! Nav further the Soul cannot fay, my Beloved is mine, but I do not know whether I am bis or no; for if one relate be known the other mufted It is impollible that the Wife should know such a man is her Husband, but the must at the fame time know also that theis his Wife But this Branch of the Doctrine is plain enough: Let me now come to the other part of it in those words. He feedeth umongst the Lillies. This claufe

Efay 58. 2.

chulc of the Text I subjoined to the Doctrine conceiving them to contain the Spoules particular enidence for her being Christs. It might (Mr. Durham) be faid, if Christ be yours, where is be? Is it likely that he is yours when he is in far away? To this the answers He feedeth amongst the Labrers should rather refer it to the atter clause, I amby a fest, any should say, how know you that you gradies. Oh, lists the Soople, he feedell among the Lillies. I am a Lillie and he feedell among the Lillies. I am a Lillie and he feedell among the Lillies. I am a Lillie and he feedell among the prefer this tende of the words. I find a great variety in the femilments of interpretess about the true fende of these words, much occasioned from the doubt fome have whether the word flock be not to be understood; he feedeth, that is, (fay they) he feedeth his flock among the Lillies, that is, with his ordinances, his word, his Section on the Lillies, that is, with his ordinances, his word, his Section ones; which is a fense I not hinged by uning valuable interpretess: But I have two things against the

1. That in this fenfe it could not be interpreted leto an evidence of what he had afferred, in either part of the former Proposition. It would (thus interpreted) neither prove that her beloved was

2. Neisher (that I semember) is the term Laller, to to be Inter-preted in an Metaphorical use of its any-where elle in Scripture. I rather (therefore) chasse by freeling here to understand, having communion and converse, and by Lilies to understand those Lilies of the Vollies, oneprioned, w. a. and so the sense is this, I know my Beloved is mine, because I know I am his, and I know that I am his, because though I be among I Thorns, yet I have the nature and condition of a Lily in me, and my Beloved hath his converse and thath a communion with those that are Lilies, it feedeth amongst the I illies. Lillies. I am not ignorant of another sense hinted (though not folely infilted on) by Bernard and others, as if the Spoule here spake prophetically of Christs Incarnation; and the words being made fleft, and dwelling amongft ut, (as Saint John Speaketh) but I have before told you, what I judg the most proper Interpretation, and best connecting these words with what in the same verse went before. Neither do I here intend to inlarge in any discourse, thewing you how properly gracious Souls are compared to Lillies. I hinted fomething shortly about it, when I opened the two first verses, and shall have occasion to add something more, when I come to the Application which is my next work.

1. Vle.

In the first place, you cannot but observe from hence, the difference bestivit Gods not tings in the Soul, it order to it of steaming, and in order to its confliction. In his workings in their to me Souls Salvation he moseth first, he loves us before we love him, he chuleth us before we chuse hims we do not, we cannot, give him unto him, we have nothing to boast, nothing to glory in. But now in order to the Souls confliction and to our near of what God hath freely given us, and done for us, we must have so what God hath freely given us, and done for us, we must have so what God hath freely given us, and done for us, we must have so what God hath freely given us, and done for us, we must have show that we choose the things which please God before we can know that he lovern as that we choose the things which please God before the Apolite First minding us of our duty, to aftertain our Spiritual estate to our felves puts calling before election, bidding us strive to make our calling and relation fare. But the Apolite First to make our calling and relation fare. But the Apolite First lower to make our calling and relation fare. But the Apolite First lower to make our calling and relation fare. But the Apolite First lower to make our calling and relation fare. But the Apolite First lower to make our calling and relation for the Apolite First lower to make our calling and relations for the both called Roam 8, 20, what are the divise all of grace towards us, can be known by us no otherwise than by the effects, or the testimony of the Spirit, (which alone knoweth the fecret things of God, as being of counsel with him, and the Spirits refimony is always concurrent with the witness of our own Spiritis.)

2. Vfe.

Secondly, This notion of truth early discovereth the decent and presumption of those who will present to great affortune or considerate of their interest in Christ, while their lives proclaim that they are now of the Lather in his time complained of many that did but cryptere Christum, make a crack, and vain-boasting of Christ. And the Prophet Islatab, long before Lather's time, told us of some that called their sleves by the name of Israel, and were come as of the waters of Judab, and sware by the name of the Lord, and made mention of the God of Israel; and v. 2. stayed themselves upon the God of Israel; yet not in truth nor in righteousness. I am attaid there are too many of these in that age of the world wherein we live; where almost is the man, that puts not in his claim to Christ, especially when he is dying? (as drowning persons you know is observed will say hold on every twig without any due consideration whether it will bear them yea or no.) what man is not ready (if not to say (it may be many in this age count that canting) Christ is mine, yet) to think so. And indeed without some such thoughts, one would wonder how the hearts of any should bear up in their pilgrimage, living in the view of Death, and in a prospect of an eter-

Efay 48.1,2.

det finth severe hose they live so the world. Their mieth, sheir quietness of Spinit perchases they by Christinalow. And these may be Prophets, that thus Prophets to them. They are Reprifed, they are Children's the Church, they keep their Church, join in confession of fins, receive absolution, when they die they receive the floor ament as a visitions. All is well doubtless, and it is sad that the Lords Transports should give incertain founds, as to this great Barrel a hoto suffer me only to allude to a story you will and in Jer. 28. Feremish, by warrant from God, had been Prophelying to Zedekishs time, the going of the Ifraelites into Babylon, and abiding there 70 years; which actually came to pass within years, Chap. 28. v. 1. Hammoniab , a flattering falle Prophet comes and contradicts Ferenish, and tells them that those that were already gone into Captivity thould within two full years re-Toremial faith unto himge, d. faith he, Ameni The Lord do for the Lord perform the words mbieb thom hoft Prophefyed, &c. Neverthe-left, v. 7, 8. hear now this. The Prophets that have been before me, and ther of old, Prophefyed both agains many Countries and great Kingdoms of War, of Etil, and of Peftilence. The Proplet which Prophelisth of Peace, when the words of that Peoples comes to poft, then fool the Prophet be known that the Lord bath fent him : Give me leave to apply it. Have you any that tell you, that deofe that are Baptifed are regenerated, and that's all the regeneration necessary: That if you fix it is enough to confess them, and take the Ministers abfiliation and she Secrement upon it, and there is no fear of Salvations That if you be Baptifed and Children of the Church, you may fay, Christin yours, in fuch a fense as to be confident he will fave won Amen. The Lord do fo, the Lord fulfill their merde; God forbid that we should not will the Salvation of all peoples Souls. But hearly you friends the Ministers of Christ that have been before ber and them too, have thought otherwife; to were the Apoftles. who tell us mithout Holiness none foall fee God; mithout fairl is is impossible to pleafe God. Christ faith, be that believesh not is damned already. In the day, the great day of Judgment if we fee thefe reachers words come to pals, then we thall believe they were the Ministers of Christ. But in the mean time (to use the expection of a late eminent Divine amongh as applied by him too Deathbed repensance. I If I had ten thousand Souls, I would not venture one of them, upon the credit of their Dodrine. But that I may that up this discourse in the last place,

Footning learnifront hance who will you of gain both to do not be would either five or die with any fishe real Blour, and are leavest how some bir, the Christ is youngly converted to Bourfor this, to find that gas are bir, bir not only by Beptifm and emirbust profession; thousands of Baptized persons, thousand of somet protessors, will hear Christ tay unto them another day depart from me those you neglet his by consensing to him, receiving him and accepting him. Bis by a free and voluntary desirious and giving upy our Souls unto his service, and interest; you built endeavour to find that you are hillier, you may be sure of this, he feeded amongst the Lillier, he hath communion with all those Souls that are Lillier; you will possibly here ask me, how you may know that you have made a true condition and surrender of your Souls out to Christ. This is a theme we often speak to. I shall therefore add little upon this subjects which was a true being a paid flux askes to be

Beloveds. Christ may have a love for you, though you have none for him; he loves us first but you shall then love him, and till you do love him; you shall never know that he hath a love for you; but if you can fay with the Spoule, and fay in touth unto Christ, My Beloved. If you can say with Reser, Lord, thou that knows all shings knowed that I love shee, thou mayest then know that thou art his. Nothing so much makes us anothers as Love, whose

loveth another, is wholly his whom he loveth

2. The Apostle, Rom. 8.9. gives another note Negatively. If wan bath not the Spirit of Christ, he is wore of his. Now (faith the Apostle, Gal. 3, 22.) the fruit of the Spirit is Love, Jos, Peace, Long-Inffering Gentlenels, Goodness, Falth, Meekness, Temperance, and observe, v. 24. there you have another note, (or indeed strictly not another) only the same diversified in expression. They share are Christs have cracified the sless, with the affections and lusts, that is, those affections and lusts of it which are contrary to the holy will of God.

3. Take a third note from the Apossle (you cannot take it better than from an infallible mouth) a Cor. 5, 17. Therefore if any man be in Christ be is a new Creature, old things are passed amay, and all things are become now. If you be Christs you are new-Creatures, you have new thoughts, new delights, new motions of your will, new workings of your affections; your sears, defires, love, joy, delight, hatred, Zeal, they are all turned to new objects; you

fear

fear fin more than thame more than Hell, you love God more than Little, Honours, Ettates, Children, Wife, Husband, yes than your own lives; all the defires of your Souls are after him, who is altogether defires; you defire to know nothing but Christ, to have nothing but Christ, to please none but Christ. I mean nothing contrary to him, nothing comparatively with him; you that hated the ways and people of God, your hatred now is holy against sin, against your felves for sin, against no persons, but for their sin; your zeal is now wholly against lin, for the service, Glory and interest of God that is in the world. But I will not en-

large.

4. When I opened the Metaphor of the Lilly, (p. 1, 2, where we had the Spoule calling herself to, and her Beloved in his activer justifying the appellation:) I told you Lillies were for two things most famous, I. Colour. 2. Printfoldels, If you be Lillies, you must be white, we no-where read of diety filts by black Lillies. Faith that interesteth the Soul in Christ, doth also purify the bears; an unclean filts you hall know you be his, have you made your Garments white in the Blood of the Lamb? Is your life free from such spous are not the Spots of Gods Children? the Lilly standing in the Air, may be weather-besten, and may contract forme dutt from the Air, which may slick to it; but it is not of it, it is not of its nature. If you be Christ, you may yet by your living in the world contract forme dust; but has, and lusts will be forreign and as strangers to your Souls.

first in those countries some of them would in a flower have 500 Clover. If you be Christs you will be fruitful too, truitful in what the Apossile tells you, you have your fruit unto boliness. Our Saviour admirably enlargeth upon this in the parable of the Pine, Joh. 15. 2. Every branch in me that bringeth not forth fruit; and every branch that beareth fruit he pargeth it that it may bring forth more fruit. If, He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth sorth much fruit, and again, v. 8. Herein is my Father gloristed, that you bear much fruit, Is shall you be my Disciples. What fruit do you bring forth to God? how is God honoured by you, in your personal capacities? In your Families? In your Relations? what service do you for God in the world? what good do you more than others? by which it may appear that you are

his wholly devoted, and gluen up to the fervice and interest of Child as your Lord. But I shall add no more on this Subject.

a bloom been you delice to know and ing but Chillien

have now by but then topical number think. I wont now things comparative, with himse you have been the wave and provis of the Alexandra was to have you will now to have and provis of the Alexandra wave and provided the Alexandra wave and the Alexandra wave

Until the day break, and the fleaders flee away. Then my Belowed, and be show unto me, as a Ros, or a young Hart upon the Mauri ains of Bether.

FOR the clearing of our way to my speaking to these words of the some part of this Verse, until she day break, and the shadows flee away; Two difficulties must be expounded, and clear'd.

The first concerning the connexion of these words.

The Second concerning the fense of them. It may be questioned whether these words be to be connected with the latter part of this verie. Then show, be nuch me as a Rocar young Hart, &co, if so, the Spoule prayers that Chieft would be with her, till the should come to him, that she might not want his company, on earth; till she should enjoy his company in Heaven; but this feemeth not to be the fense, not only because of the nexalerb, turn thou; but I observe under the word foodows in the Hebrew, their point they call, Athrach, which divideth the members of a sentence and feemeth to bint to us, that this part of the fentence is finished in those words, until the day break, and the shadows flee sway. But on the other fide, it is diffinguished from the words also going before by the stop, the Hebrew Grammarians call Sob Polish, which is the fame with what we call a period or full flop. So that it feems to be left as a perfect fentence of itself, but that it cannot be, for it carrieth not with it a perfect fense a we are therefore left at a great liberty to apply it to a part of what went before or to the whole of it, and we cannot much err; because whether we apply it to the one or to the other clause, it hath a truth in it. If we make the fenfe thus : He feedeth amount the Lillies, until the day break, and the hadows flee away, It fignifieth to us : That perpetual communion which Christ will have mit believers, until their death, and with his Church, until his fecond coming to Judgment new facever which is a great troth. But Tillall tather discourse it as setuing to the first Clause. My Beloved w mine, and I am his: and fo fas I hinted to you before I to is interpreted by a late Reverend Amber: It fpeaketh the Spoules Faith in Christ as to her own state for the future; My Beloved is mine, and I am bis, yea, and it shall be so until the day break, and the shadows flee away. But that phrase must be opened, and concerning it I defire you to observe old allow at

1. Some make it the expression of the true thraclites in the Femile Church, expressing their faith for God's communion with them. until the coming of the Meffes when the ceremonial Law which was nothing but shadaws of things to come, should flee away, and the glorious Gofpel-day (hould break But I do not at all fayour the opinion of choic who relirain the excellent matter in this mong to the

Jewish Church in right box , my : Mil well to said

2. Some by the fadows here understand the dark state of defertion in which at this time was, or at least unto which she was, entring. Indeed there's no fo dark fladow as a frate of defertion. occasioned by lotne influences of him who is the Sun of Righteoulnels. Butivet I do not think this the lense here, in which it would only fignifie her faith in Chriff, for fomething of his presence, and maintaining an union with her, even whiles her communion with him was darkned through the abfence of fome of his gracious manifeflations.

and had rather therefore agree with those, (and they age the most of Expositors, I who interpret this either of the day of particular judgment, or of general judgment, and principally with reference to the laft; for indeed Death doth not put an end to our union withour Beloved, though it dif-uniteth our Souls and Bodies. In that great Day of the Lord, the Day will indeed break, and all the shadows will flee away; we shall lerve the Lord no more with this body of Death : no more in Ordinances, C which though wonderfully more lightfome and glorious than thole of the lewish Church yet our communion with God in them is but like a night, like as in fliadow compared with the Communion which the Saints thall have with their Beloved in Heaven, when they shall yet bim as ben to face to face, and for ever be mith the

Well, bur hall not our Beloved be ours, and we his beyond that time & Thue is the laft thing, (and it is but an ordinary notion)

which

stant denotat terminum eumq; aliquando ineludit alignande taclydit. Ravancila.

which I shall observe to you as to the Explication of the Words. The word Until, doth not import the determination of the thing spoken of, at the time to which it referreth; but often fignifies Never as where it is faid, Michal had no more children antil the day of her death. But this is a very ordinary Observation by them which have any thing considered the particles used in holy Writ. The Observation which I shall commend to you, is,

That a believing Souls Union with its Beloved shall continue un-

til the day breaks, and the shadows fice away. Or thus,

A believing Soul may know that Christ shall be his, and he shall be Christs, until the day breaks, and the shadows flee away, even for ever.

This Proposition hints us two things:

1. Chrifts Union with the Soul, and its perseverance with Chrift during all the shadows of this life : yea, and their mutual union for ever.

2. Secondly, It hinteth the possibility of the Souls knowledg of its abiding with Christ, and Christ with it: I must begin with the first; for the thing must be before it can be known. It must be a truth that Chrift will be ours , and we fhall be bis, until the day break, and the landows flee away, or we cannot fay fo ; Let me first fpeak a word or two of that.

Gan. Con, Trid.

1. The conjugal Union which is betwirt Christ and every truly be-Seff. 6. Can.23. lieving Soul, is a certain, and shall be an abiding Union, even till the day of Judgment. There is no fuch thing as a falling away from a frate of Grace. Here our Adversaries are both, the Papilly and the Arminians : The Papifts Anathematize all that fay, that he who is justified cannot fall from Grace. Bertins, a great man amongst the Arminians, writes a Book about the Aportacy of the Saints : A Book which King James faith, deserved for the very Title to be burned, (for it is not long those points have had any favour inthe Universities, or Church of England.) The Papifts and Armimions fay that Christians may fall away from Grace both totally & finally. The Catherans fay, they may fall away totally, but not finally, We fay, they can neither fall away totally, nor finally. Our Church Are: 17. calleth Predestination to life, The everlasting purpose of God before the foundations of the World were laid, whereby be bath confrantly decreed by bis Counfel fecret to m. to deliver from curfe and damnation those whom he bath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and so bring them by Christ to everlefting Salvation, as Veffels made to

Articles of Religion, 1462. Art. 17.

bonour.

bostos de. But that you may rightly understand the Queffion :

1. It must be underfreed of thole who have the feed of God. We Marth 12. 20. need not be told by our Adversaries of those that in the Parable, Heb. 6. 4. Matth. 13. received the Word with joy, yet fell away; nor of those mentioned by the Apostle, that Receive some illuminations, and tafte fome Spiritual gifts, and the powers of the life to come, and yet may fall away. We know how much Hered is faid to have done: how far Judas went; how abundantly the Scripture speaks of temporary Professors that yet deny God, and forget they are purged from their old wickedness. We do not say that all shall perfevere that make a thew of Christs Relation to them, and theirs to Christ, or live in some outward profession: We may say of these as the Apolile speaks, they were not of Gods little-flock; if they had been of them, they had continued with them. And to this purpole Augustine speaks ingenuously, Non erant in numero filiorum, quando erant in fide filierum; they were not in the number of Sons when they bare the profession and name of Sons. The queflion is not, whether Hypocrite hall always abide in their hypocrific and outward profession; but whether Vere fideler fuch as are true Believers, shall abide in their state? nor whether the Bristolfrome, but whether the true Diamond, shall keep its glory?

2. The Question is about a Total or a final falling away, or both. No one doubts but that an eled Veffel, may by standing in the air of the World become dirty? Who liveth and finneth not? We are so far from afferting, that a child of God cannot fin; that we think it very hard to fay, what fin fexcepting that against the holy Ghoft he may not commit; and certainly it is hard for him to determine that duly confiders the failures of David Solomon, Peter, Lot, Noab. But we fay, he cannot fo fin as to fall from his jufliffed flate, or to lose his right to eternal life. I pray observe, I fay, he doth not lose his right to Eternal Sulvation. I must diffinguish here between, t. A Right to a thing; and 2. A meetnels for a thing. Sins especially of this nature lose a man his finely for Heaven, but they do not lose his right to Heaven. When David had committed Murther, and before he was convinced of it, and repented of it, he was not fit for Heaven; nor was it possible he should have come there not washed and cleanfed, but at that very time he had a right to it; and it was then fure enough, that (though first washed , and cleanfed, yet) be should certainly be

faved.

3. Thirdly, The Question is not, Whether a justified, regenerate Soul, can in his core power and strength hold on in his way; but only, Whether he shall hold on or no? Those who contend for the certainty and abiding of the Saints state, are very far from thinking and affirming that there is any such Power in them; or that by their own power they shall be able to hold out: they know that of our selves we are able to do nothing. That it is his strength which is persected in our weakness; that the Saints themselves are kept by the power of God to Salvation; that if they stand they stand by

Grace, and are faved by Grace.

4. Fourthly, The question is not, Whether a Christian's union with Christ (ball abide, let bim live as be lift ? Or, whether be weth any means in order to such a perseverance and abiding, yea or no? We fufficiently know that it is the indiffentable duty of every Christian, to endeavour to make his calling and election fure: to frive to enter in at the frait gale ; while be flands to take beed left be falls ; to walk circumspettly, not as fools, but as wife : we fay perseverance is the Grace of God; By grace we stand:) but we fay, this grace of God is given in the ale of means on our part. and cannot otherwise be expected; and if it were possible that a child of God could live and die in a flate of fin, or under the guilt of fin, not repented of, he would find that he should not be Christs. nor Christ his : But this we fay, every Elett Soul, every true Believer, though he falls, be fall rife, though be finishe thall renew bis faith and repentance before he dies ; he fhall bold one to the end and to that be faved. So then the Queltion is plainty this? Whether one that is elected and truly justified through Faith, may cither totally or finely fall away, and lose his justified estate and fayour with God, or shall not according to the gracious ordination, council and decree of God, abide and continue, and by the grace of God be preferred in that flate; that grace quickening him, though he may fall; and for so be shall rife again by a true faith and repentance, and so be certainly and eternally faved in the day of the Lord Jefus. We affirm the latter, vis. "That'?very elect Veffel, every Soul, mbo by the grace of Election ordaining bim to eternal life, being for ordained doth truly believe, shall by pertue of the Special grace of God, Softaining and upholding, and encreafing his own mork in him, and quickening bimes the exercises of daily repentance, fairb and holiness, shall real certainty be kept in his justified state unto Eternal life; even until the day break and the Madoms

fradows flee away, (as the Text expresses it.) We do not lav. that the Saimes are in no possibility of falling away; but only that they frall not fall through Gods gracious Covenant and affiftance. It is impossible they should stand off themselves : and it is impossible they should fall, because God will hold them up and carry them on.

This will fully appear from what I shall speak upon the second head, viz.

From whence it is that we affirm this . That the Union and Rela- Du. tion betweent Christ and the Soul shall abide until the day break, and

until the hadows flee away ?

1. In General, If there be a failure, it muft either be on Chrifts part or our part : either becaufe our Lord will caft is off , or becaufe we may east him off? But it is upon netther of thefe accounts like to fail. In thort. This is a point abundantly fooken to by many Emigent Divines, and in large Treatifes : and it is hardly possible for me to fpeak any thing to you that shall be folid and new in this great Point. Divines do generally conclude this certainty of the fuffis fied Soul's state to depend upon these things : 1. An unchangeable Love, 2. An immutable Decree, 3. An unalterable Covenant, 4.A. certain Redomption, 5. An irrevocable Calling, 6. An immutable Word, 7: A potent Interceffion, 8. An immortal Seed. I will dif-

course a little upon them all.

1. I fay , they found it upon Gods Free, Immutable and sonfrant Love: That God is free, immutable, and unchangeable in bis; love, doth not only appear from the immutibility of his Nature, (Immutability being effential to him;) Iam (laith he) the God that changeth not, and indeed he could not be God if he were not unchangeable; and as he is in all things unchangeable, to particularly in his Love. John 13. 1. Having loved bis own which were in the world, be loved them unto the end : Elay 54.8. With everlafring kindneft will I bave merey upon thee. I am aware of what Arminians fay to this, that the Text John 12, 1. concludes no further than the continuance of Christs love to his Disciples to the end of bis life as long as he abode in the World; but certainly it need conclude no more, for his Love did not abate to his people by his going up to Heaven; whither he tells them, chep. 14. He went to prepare a place for them, and that he would come again to. them and take them to himself; and in the mean time lend them the Comforter, who thould be, and abide with them. And Chap.

15. He tells them he would be as a Vine, and they as the Wancher; But I shall not enlarge upon this Head; because Love in God is manifested by his acts of Grace, to which I shall in the next place

lpeak.

Secondly, We fay their Perfeverance is founded upon an immuible decree, (that of Election we mean): The Foundation of God, fandetb fiere (faith the Apostle, 2 Tim. 2. 19.) The Lard knoweth who are bis, God hath ordained fome to everlafting life: This the Scripture speaketh sufficiently, Att, 13.48. and in many other places: now this being a Counsel and purpose of God, the question is, whether it be immutable or no; And certainly soher Persons may easily satisfie themselves in this, if they would but confider, upon what the mutability and changeableness of our purposes depends, which can be nothing else but our ignorance. We should never alter any purpose we make if we had a certain knowledg, and forelight of things which would afterward come to pass. But God did certainly know all things that should come to pass, nothing could so come to pass, without his efficiency or permission: now considering this fulness of knowledg in God, what reason can we imagin for the uncertainty of his purpose, unless we could imagin God as incertain as some foolish man, that never knoweth his own mind. The Union betwixt Christ and them must abide for ever, because God by an unchangeable purpose hath ordained them to everlasting life : yea and ordained them unto good works alfo, that they should walk in them as the means in order to this end.

Thirdly. We say their Perseverance, and the certainty of their abiding spiritual state, is sounded upon an unasterable Covenant. A Covenant there is, is between God and Christ as their head and surety; and 2. between God and them, both of them certain, and inalterable: we believe an eternal stipulation between the Eternal Father and his Son; wherein Christ both Covenanted with his Father for himsels, as the bead of the eled, that he would do what-soever the will of God was as to the means of purchase in order to the satisfaction of divine Justice for the sins of the elect. And for them as he was the surety of the eled: That they through his Grace, and in his strength, should repent, believe, and do what the eternal Father required of them. And the Father Covenanted with his Son, that he would accept of what he should do and suffer, The pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his band, he should

for of the Travel of bir Soul and be fatisfied : And the elect believ. ing in him thould be laved: It were easie enough to make out this Covenant to you from variety of Scriptures, (and I have heretofore done it): my present business, is only to aver the certainty of this Covenant: Arminjans make a firange Covenant, and fuch a one as none would take. They would make the Covenant to be no more, than that whofoever believeth hall be faved. This indeed is what we are bound to Preach, we know not whom God hath chosen, but fulfill the command of Christ in holding out the Gofpel to all : but can any imagin, that the Omniscient God should make fuch a Covenant with his Son, who from all eternity, both knew, who would, and who would not believe. The reason of our incertain, and condition all Covenants, and purposes, is our ignorance; but the alknowing God could have no reason for such a Covenant. The Covenant was doubtless certain, both as to Persons and Things, and inalterable; therefore called an everlasting Covenant, Heb. 13. v. 20. Ezech. 27. 26. Usi. 61. 8. not only from all eternity, but fuch as shall last, and abide to eternity : An: established Covenant as the Scripture calls it.

Fourthly, we fay, this abiding of their state is founded in a full and certain Redemption. I say a full redemption, wherein all' was finished and actually paid into the hands of Divine Justice. For all the fins of the elect, fo that a pardon must upon their exercises. of Faith iffue out unto them, upon their renewing fins; Christ paid a full price for their fins, for all their fins: yea and it was a certain Redemption. Arminians fancy such a Redemption, as was. confistent, though not one Person had been saved; they tell us. that Christ haid down his life upon these terms. That if men would believe it should be applied to them, but whether they would or no, was at all mens choice. According to this Doctrine. Christs blood might have been sted in vain as to all the world, we believe that Christ had a certain number of sheep that he knew by name, and had their names written in the book of Life; that for these he laid down bis life, to purchase not a meer possibility but a certainty of Salvation for them : Which being for it is neceffary they should persevere, or all the fruit of Christs blood had! been loft. I forbear Scriptures in these so ordinary and plain subjects, believing you able enough to turn to Scriptures to prove thefe things. I lay down my life for the fleep, faith Chrift, To. 10. 15. v. 27. I know them, they follow me; and I give unto them eternal ife, and they shall never perish.

5. We say this their abiding state is sounded upon an immobile word: This is Gods Covenant with us, his word of promise; God hath said he will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able. They shall be like Mount Sion which shall never be removed. Plasm 125. They shall be kept through the power of God by saith unto salvation, I Pet a 5. None shall plack them eat of his band, John 10, 28. That he will keep them and establish them, 2 Thes. 3, 3. But I shall forbear: We have many, very many great and precious Promises (to this purpose,) given us in holy Writ: and heaven and earth shall pass amay, before one title of what God hath said shall pass amay.

6. Sixfhly, We say, this their abiding state is sounded upon an irrevocable Calling, Rom 11.29. The gists and calling of God are mithout repentance. Rom. 8.8. Wham be calleth, those be justifieth, and whom he justifieth, those he will glorifie. We know there is a ministerial Calling; of which Christ speaketh, saying, Many are essled, but sew are chosen: But we speak of that Calling which is powerful, and to which obedience is yielded; which is the effectual working of his divine Power. The Apostle calleth it, 1 Thess. 2.13. The Words effectual working in them that believe. The indweling of the Spirit solloweth this: and the holy Spirit never more

leaveth the Soul in which it once dwelleth.

7. Seventhly, This abiding state of the Sponse is founded upon a potent Intercession. There is nothing besides sin which can separate between the Soul and God: Now, saith the Apostle, 1 Job. 2.1. If we sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteons. We know that he is in Heaven, that he ever liveth to make intercession for us, and that him the Father heaveth always: I have prayed for thee, saith Christ, that thy faith may not fail, Luke 22.32. What Christ did for Peter on earth, he doth for all his Saints now in heaven; he is continually making Intercession for us; he began his Intercession upon the Earth, John 17.11. Holy father, keep the se whom thou hast given me: v: 15. I pray that thou shoulds keep them from evil.

8. Lastly, (for I will name no more,) it is founded upon the immerial feed that abide the in them, I John 3.9. Who sever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his feed remainesh in him; and be caused, sin because he is barn of God. They are born again (saith the Apolite, 1 Pet. 1.33.) not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abide the for ever: and this Word of

God descheth in them : wes, and fo do those foarks of the Spirit. those habits of Grace, which are wrought in their hearts by the holy Spirit, and by the fame boly Spirit continually breathing upon them preserved and kept alive, and recovered from the ashes of corruption which fometimes feemeth to cover them. Thus I have given you an account of the chief grounds of the abiding state of the Saints, and the continuing Union which is betwixt Christ and their Souls. I might have insisted on many more, as the Fathers donation of them to Christ; the feeling of the Spirit, the affurance they have of the hearing of their prayers, (a piece of which is always their bolding on to the end;) and many others ordinarily used by Divines in this cafe. But my delign was not to fpeak all which might have been faid in fo large a Subjectionly to be is the tervant of Chaill, or the Spouloids and on the franch

I had thought to have enlarged a little further in answering fome of the Objections which those otherwise-minded bring: But if you keep in mind those four things by which I opened the the Oneftion it is needless aufor their Objections are usually either from fuch Texts, or Examples as manifeftly fpeak of bypecrites, who never had any fuch real Union, or fuch Texts as mention the fallings of Gods people, but the ofe neither total nor final: or elfe they run upon those vain suppositions. That we hold that Christians may fland in their own strength, or need not use any just endeavours, but may live as they list; none of which things we own as you have heard. I will not therefore engage here in fo tedious a work, which is also done to my hands by so many excellent persons: but shall pass to the second part of the Propofition.

That a child of God may know that the union betwint bim and 3. Memb. Christ thall abide for ever : until the day break and the shadows flee away, as this Text phrafethin. Let moopen it in a few Conclufions, then I shall confirm it to you.

1. Though we fay Believers may know, and may be fure of it : yet we do not fay every true Believer doth know it; and it affored of it: We are not always in an actual possession of what struly is our right. The knowledg of this as to our particular and being able to fay fo, depends upon the clearness of our minds, able to difcern our own acts: yea, and upon our present state too. David might have known that he should have been King over Ifrael and Fudab. Ttt

Indah, though in an hour of temptation he cryeth out, I hall one

day die by the band of Saul.

2. He cannot know it, whiles his conscience tellerb him be lyeth under the guilt of fin not repented of: for though under such a guilt there be in reality a great difference between an elect, justified Soul, and one not justified; yet to his own apprehension there can be no difference a for all his guidance as to this knowledg must be from the Scripture, which speaketh nothing to encourage a Soul really lying under the guilt of Sin not repented of.

3. Thirdly, He cannot know it but in the walking in that comfore of life, and in the use of those means which God bath appointed him for the maintaining and preserving of this Union. The Scripture saith, His fervants you are whom you obey. A man cannot know that he is the servant of Christ, or the Spouse of Christ, unless he sinds his heart set to obey Christ, studying to perfect holiness in

the fear of God.

This is then all which we affirm in this Point.

That a gracious Soul lying not under the notorious guilt of any fin not repented of; but herein exercifing himself to keep a conscience void of offence both towards God and towards man: having his Spirit free from less usual incumbrances of melancholick differences and temptations, may know and be able to conclude, not only his present Union with Christ, but also the abiding of this Union: yea, and this (as I said before for the knowledge of the Union) without any extraordinary Revelation from Heaven, but from the mere ordinary exercises of Faith under the ordinary affishances of the blessed Spirit of God, enabling it to see the Truth, and Sincerity of its own acts.

r. Now as to the proof of this, it dependeth perfectly upon what I have all this while been discoursing to you, that is, Gods Revelation of the certainty of the thing in it felf; for granting the thing in it self certain, (which is that which I have been all along discoursing:) and that there is a sufficient Revelation of it in the Book of God; what should hinder but that we may know it? Supposing us to believe the Word of God, and that the Spirit of God affisheth us to discour the truth of our own acts of Faith, and

in the study of Holiness.

2. Again, The Scripture once and again tells us of joy, joy in the holy Ghost as a frait of the Spirit, as a consequent and effect of

Fulti-

Jaffification, &c. Rom. 5.2. Gal. 5.22. Now how could the children of God be capable of rejeveing in the bopes of the glory of God, if they were not capable of knowing that they thall be brought to that glory? How could they rejoyee in the Lord, and again rejoyce, if they must always live in fear flavish fear, of falling from their bleffed flate?

2. Further, Yet what shall we make of that fealing with the boly Spirit of Promife offer believing, which the Apolle calleth the earnest Eph. 3.13,14. of our Inberitance unto the Redemption of the purchased Poffession? What is that Seal, and earnest of the Spirit in our bearts, mentioned in 2 Cor. 1. 22 ? What doth all this fignify, but the possibility of

fuch a Knowledg ?

4. Laftly, If this were not, what certainty could there be in Faith? The object of Faith is the Proposition of the word; the word as I have shewed abundantly revealeth and confirmeth this abiding state of the Soul united to Christ: if now having such Promiles, the Soul could not yet know it, and might not yet be able to fay it, there could be no certainty at all in Faith; nay, faith would be rather worfe than an opinion: whereas undoubtedly as there is the highest certainty of a thing imaginable in a divine Revelation, nothing can be more certain than what God hath faid shall be : fo as to us we can never be made more certain of any thing than what Faith truffing to a divine Revelation gives us the affurance of. But I shall insist no more upon the Doctrinal part, I come to the Application; and shall begin shewing you how profitable this Doctrine may be to us for Instruction. Apostle faith, 2 Tim. 2.16. that all Scripture is given by divine In-Spiration of God, and is profitable for Dodrine, for reproof, for correction, for infruction in righteoufnels. The Apostle to the Romans, Chap. 15. 4. gives us another ule of Scripture, viz. for our comfort. I will begin with shewing you the usefulness of this truth for Infruction.

1. In the first place, we may be instructed from hence, bow I. Branch. much better the flate of the Saints under the Gofpel is than the flate of Adam while be was in the state of Innocency ? So as God hath kept his best Wine unto the last. Undoubtedly no man can consider the state of a man in which he was created, but must cry out with the Pfalmift, Pfal. 8. 4. What is man that thou art mindful of bim, and the Son of man, that thou vifiteft; for thou baft made bine little lower than the Angels? What a word is that, Gen. 1. 27. In

the image of God created be bim; and how ready are we to fav in our hearts. Ob that man had never fallen, then a man might have gone from Earth to Heaven as out of his Kitchin fato his Parlour! But hearken my beloved, you know not what you fay; The flare of a Soul in Christ is infinitely more defireable, infinitely more happy. Divines use to express it thus: Adam had a poffe non peccare; The justified Soul hath a non poffe peccare. Adam was created with a liberty of will, in a state of righteoutness, and with a liberty of will: in these two things stood Adams happiness. He came into the World not in debt, not a child of wrath, (as we all are born :) his Father was God. Here indeed he had the advantage of us; we are clog'd with his guilt, we are behind-hand with the Justice of God, in the very hour in which we are born. This is truth : But fet this alide, our ftate is far better than his. He indeed might have chosen whether he would or no have eaten of the tree of forbidden-fruit. But of the juftified Soul it is true. non potest peccare, he cannot fin, that is, not unto death, I John 3. 6. Wholoever abideth in bim finneth not, whofoever finneth bath not feen bim, neither known him: Adam might have flood: The ju-ftified Soul shall stand, no man shall plack it out of its Fathers hand, nor out of Christs hand. The justified Soul indeed stands not like the good Angels, confirmati in bonitate, to confirm d'in holinels that it doth fin ; no, who liveth, and finneth not against God? but fuch a Soul stands confirmata in faticitate, confirm'd in happinels, it cannot more be damned than an Angel can. Sin indeed by Adam's fall, it diffuseth itself to all his Posterity : but upon the fall Grace bath much more abounded. Give me leave here to cry out with a devout Author, (though a Jesuit,) Malo debere Jesu meo saluien quem Adamo, nam debeo certiorem, fortasse majorem, oc. and so he goes on. I shall give you it in English; "I had rather "(faith he,) be indebted to Christ for my Salvation than to Adam; I am indebted for a more certain Salvation, perhaps a greater: I rejoyce, I rejoyce in the grace of Christ venerable. and almost envied by Angels; I rejoyce in the wounds of him. "who was the only-begotten Son of God. I rejoyce in the pa-"tience of him who was most mighty, in the sufferings of him, who according to his divine Nature a could not suffer. It is true, Adam had less misery, but he had also less certainty of his happy state. O my Soul! bless the Lord for the Covenant of Grace, bless the Lord for thy Gospel-state, it is a far more excellent

lent effate than that of Adam. Though we meet with more affilitions in it, yet the affictions are but such as Christ hath born, Christ hath sanctified, and in bearing of which we are conformable unto Death. But let that be enough to have spoken to that first Branch.

We may (Secondly) conclude from hence what is to be judged of those who totally and finally fall from their profession. Such were Tudas and others, whose examples therefore must not be brought as arguments against this truth, though this be too ordinarily done : thus Berting (whom the Heirs of his Doctine may if they please add for a new example, for I think he died a renegado from the Protestant Religion:) argues for the possibility of the Saints falling from the example of the Angels, Jude 6: (but they were not the elect of Angels, fure (the examples of Sant, Hymeneus; Philetus, Demas, Dorothem, Nicholas the Deacon, (whom he fuppofeth the Author of the Doctrine of the Nicholaitones, (heinftangeth alfo in Adam and Solomon ; but it will be hard for his friends to prove that either of them fell away, totally or finally. In thorn the Apostle hath taught us what to determine, I fob.2.19. They ment out from us, they were not of us ; for if they bad been of us they had continued with us. We know the Scripture speaks of some that should depart from the Faith, I Tim. 1. 1. That should deny the Lord that bought them, 2 Pet. 11. 1. that should depart from the boly Dollrine received, which they had better never have known, 2 Pet. 2. 20. but we fay the Scripture no where speaks of the elest, or of any truly Justifiedor Sandified, that fell away and perished; nay we fay not only particular Scriptures, but the whole Systeme of Gofspel-Doctrine is quite contrary to this. We grant that Gods pedple may fall foully as David, Solon and others did, but not votally, not finally. We grant there are reforapos, temporary professors, many that take up a profession of the Gospel, and go a great way in it, but rectiving not the touth in the love of it, God may give them up to believe lies, that they may be danted who have pleafure in mirighteonfacfs: in thort there can be no argument from examples 4gainst this truth because there can be no example produced of any whom the Scripture mentions, as justified and truly Sandified, who fell away and role nomore; if any profession full away totally and finally, they were fuch as were Hypocrites, and in whom the root of the motter never was, shough they made a taking liftering thew and glorious appearance to the world hand deed set and Thirdly, ny.

3. Branch.

Thirdly, We may observe from hence, that though all those who bave an interest in Christ bave cause of rejoycing in this Dollrine, yet none bave canfe of boafting. I shall by and by more thew you that all have cause of rejoyeing; in this my present business is only to thew you that none have cause of boasting. I mean in, or of themfelves, rejoice in the Lord, and clory in God we may, and it is our duty; but I fay all boafting in or of our felves is excluded, the reason is plain because we fland not in our own ftrength but all by grace. It feems a little harsh in our ears, but hath much of a truth in it. 1. It is impossible the Saints should stand. 2. It is impossible the Saints (hould fall away, either totally or finally. The first is impossible with respect to their own strength. The Second in regard of Gods purpose and grace, they have falling propensions, and inclinations, hearts prone to fall, pay which could not hold if God did not uphold. Thus (to use the simile of a very worthy Author;) It was very possible that Christs bones might have been broken upon the Crofs, (they were not of Iron more than the other Malefactors which were crucified with him:) but they were not broken, nay it was impossible that they should have been broken, because God had decreed they should not, and the Scripture had faid, a Bone of him should not be broken. This is the case of the Children of God, and this I fay thuts out all boafting on their fide, they have received the grace by and in which they fland, and have reason to glory as if they stood in their own strength, and by their own power. No, you are kept by the power of God through faith unto Salvation, not by your own ftrength, but by Gods power. Arminians give a great deal more to man, who allow him a freedom, and power of his own will to Spiritual actions; and this by the way learnish the Children of God humility.

4 Branch.

Fourthly, We may observe from hence, that this Doctrine of the abiding states of the Saints, leaves them no time for idleness, no room for security; this is a great charge with which some load this Doctrine, as if it rendred men without fear and secure, and gave them advantage to live as they listed. But how is this possible! when we say, that God hath decreed their perseverance in boliness, in their mse of the means and doing what in them lies. And that none can be sure of his union or the abiding of it while he is under the guilt of Sin, unrepented of, nor any longer than while he finds his heart bent to keep all the commandments of God. Holiness and bappiness cannot

cannot be separated one from another, God hath joined them together; and Holinefs confifts in Action. This Doctrine doth not discharge us from the study, and indeavour of Holiness, it only incourageth us, by affurance to us of Gods bleffing upon our indeavours, that if we run we shall obtain, we shall not be as those that bear the Air. Our enemies shall not be too hard for us, no man, no luft, no Devil shall pluck us out of the Fathers hand, nor out of the Sons hand, so as indeed it teacheth us fear and caution, and all manner of holy circumspection; and leaves a room for the force and efficacy of all the exhortations, promiles and threatnings in all the book of God, but leaves not an hours liberty for fleep or droufinell'; or fin or wickedness. Did Gods affuring Mofes, Johns, David and others that they should certainly conquer their enemies, discharge them from fighting think we?

4. Laftly, You may from the former discourfe observe, upon 5. Branch. what a Chain the great truths of God hang, which relate to our Salvations they are like beads upon a firing, which if one drops off, all follow one after another. Mark I pray you, they that deny the perseverance of the Saints are forced to deny the certainty of Election, the certainty of the Covenant with Christ, the certainty of Redemption as to the persons Redeemed, the efficacy of the divine Intercession, the absoluteness of the Fathers gift, effectual grace; and forced to hold, that God elected no persons but qualities. That Christ made a Covenant with his Father, and died for he knew not whom. So dangerous a thing it is to break one link in the Golden Chain of causes of mans Salvation; to warp inone of the great Doctrines of the Gospel; one error like a lye requireth another to defend it. But I shall add no more to this first Branch, the wing you how far this Doctrine may be useful to you for Instruction. I proceed to shew you, how through the comfort of it you may hope.

Life up then your beads; O you despondent and self-discouraging 2. Use. poor Souls! fay not as David did in the fit of his unbelief, I final one day die by the hand of Sant; I shall one day die by the hand of my Lufts and Corruptions; fay not I shall never hold out to the end, and fo never be faved. Let your business be to make your calling fure, to read over your evidences, to maintain your communion with God, and trouble not your felves, with the fears of your falling away, and lofing your bleffed flate. Fear nor thou worm Facob (faith God) I will frengsben thee. I will uphold thee with.

the band of my Righteon nefs. I fay, fear not, my meaning

1. Fear not with a flavish and distracting fear. Fear is a passion which lays fetters upon our Spirit, and keeps the Soul in Bondage. It is the Aposiles expression, somethrough fear of Death are all their life-time Subject to Bondage, this is a base fear, and dishonours God many ways, and debilitates and weakens the Soul, that it doth not, it cannot (under these shackles) use its legs to walk in the ways of God, with that ability and freedom as it ought.

2. Fear not with a distrustful unbelieving fear. Take beed of

fuch a fear as should iffue in any distrust in God. bo look of sit

2. But fear with a moderate quickening fear; there is a fear that deadeth the heart, and there is a fear which quickeneth and addeth wings unto it; you may experience it in your felves, a man may be so afraid of a danger, that he cannot stir a foot to remove himfelf from it; and he may be so afraid as only to make him run away the faster from the place where it is. Take heed of the form rear; but fear with the latter fear; we are bid to ferve the Lord with fear, and to work out our Salvation with fear and trembling but they are the former degrees of fear, which I am in this place cautioning the Souls of Gods people against. This fear, which is feldom found in a Soul, but from one of these causes : 1. Either Some natural melancholick distemper, which (as I have often told you) disposeth the mind of a man to fear where no fear is, and is feldom removed; but by the bleffing of God, upon the use of such means as are proper to remove or abate the natural cause, without the ceasing of which for the proper effect to cease were miraculous. and to expect it, were but to make a trial of God, whether he would work a miracle, which in plain English is but a tempting of God. Or elfe, 2. The cause of them is some vehement impression, which Satan makes upon our Spirits, (which we call Temptations,) and these are very rare cases unless where the former mentioned cause concurreth, for Satan in such fears is seldome more than a Social cause. Taking advantage of the disposition of the mind to receive such untoward impressions, Or, 3. Weakness, or prepoffession of the Judgment, with what is contrary to this truth viz. That it is possible for Souls to lose their justified estate. Now let the cause be what it will, the effect is certainly. 1. Unprofitable. 2. Sinful. 3. Groundless. Which are three great arguments against it. Let me a little inlarge upon each of them. I fay.

1. It is suprofitable. We may fay of fear as we fay of Fire . It is a good Servant, but it is an ill Mafter. If a man can keep his fear in the notion of a Servant, to ferve his Soul in its match-tomer, to fland centry against fin, it is an excellent Servant : yea give me leave to tell you, a man cannot keep house like a Christian without this Porter at the Gates do this and live, Gen. 42. 18. that is, I durft do you no wrong for I fear God; where a dread of God keeps the gates of a Christians heart, it will keep out many a bold temptation, that would press in to destroy a Soul. The man in power though he hath It in his power to oppress his poor neighbour, yet he durst not do it, why? because he feareth God. The Tradelinan, though he hath an advantage from the ignorance or the inadvertency, of his customer to cheat his customer, yet he durst not do it, because he fears God. I say it is an admirable Servant, and a Christian cannot manage his concerns in the world without it. he that fears not God nor his wrath, what may he not do? but it is a very bad Mafter; we may fay of it as Job faid of the too importunate, or impertinent words of his friends, Job 6. 25. How forcible are right words, but your arguings what do they reprove? what a mighty thing is fear? how potent to awe our Souls, that are naturally extravagant, and subject to wander out of the right paths of Gods Commandments? but fuch a fear as I have described to you, a flavish and diffracting fear, an unbelieving and difiruftful fear, what good doth it doe? it weakens the Soul it keeps it in a perpetual torment, it makes the Soul pittiful fcrupulous, unjuftly diffident; in short it profiteth the Soul for nothingit disadvantageth the Soul for every thing that is duty.

2. It is not meerly unprofitable, but it is exceedingly finful. All fuch fear discomposeth the Soul, and keeps it in a continual terror and torment, it spoils all the Souls joy and rejoycing in the Lord; and give me leave to tell you, ther's nothing so promoveth holiness, nothing more puts the Soul on in the ways of God than a freedom and chearfulness of Spirit. It was one great fruit of Christs Redemption, Lnk. 1.74. to deliver us out of the hand of ome enemies, that we might serve him without fear, in Holiness and Righteousness, all the days of our life: and the Apostle tell us, Heb. 2. 19, that Christ therefore died, not only that through death he might desire them who through fear of death, were all their life time

Subject to Bondage. Our Lord knew, how much the fear, the flaville fear of death, keeps the Soul in Bondage. Now the fear of falling away, the fear of Hell, hath doubtless no less influence; pay if it were not for this the fear of Death would have no influence, or very little influence upon any believer, then, it is finful as it deftroyeth faith or at left all boldness in Faith. So much as is of this fear in the Soul, fo much there is in it of diffruft, and unbelief in the promise of God; and unbelief is that evil root, from which forout out most of our departings from the living God : as God is honoured, greatly honoured, by our taking his word, truffing to it, and depending upon it; so he is proportionably dishonoured. by our not attending to it, not believing it, not truffing to it, or depending upon it. Besides this, it doth infinitely dispose-the Soul to temptations, indeed this as the chief, (though not the alone thing) is that which makes the Sout of a person, upon whom melancholy hath to a great degree prevailed, so much under the power of Satans temptations: Satan takes advantage of that exceffive fear, which from a natural cause always possesseth such perfons.

3. Lastly, Consider it is groundless. I remember a passage in David, Pfal. 25.3. Let them be ashamed (faith David) which transgress without cause. The causelesness of a transgression, much aggravates the guilt, indeed every finner is a transgreffor without a cause; there's no cause for any to fin against God, Gods providence offereth no caufe; nothing can justifie a fin, but though there can be no cause for a man to sin, yet a man may have more temptations to fome fins than others: but against this fin of distracting, and distrustful fear God hath more abundantly provided, he hath secured us against it, as you have heard, many ways; a Child of God cannot fear Gods casting him off but he must deny the certainty of the election of grace: the certainty of the Covenant of grace; the certainty of the Fathere gift of the elect to Christ: The certainty of Christs Redemption; the certainty of many great & precious promises, the certainty of that calling of God, which is without Repentance; the abiding of the feed of God : He must deny either the power of God, or the faithfulness of God, for God hath faid, they are kept through faith, by the power of Ged unto Salvation; do they doubt Gods power? they question Gods Omnipotency, and deny him to be God Almighty; to be the Lord El haddai allfufficient : Do they question whether God will use this power for them? they deny then his Love and his Truth; he hath faid

faid he loves them to the end; he hath faid, they shall be kept through faith by the power of God to Salvation. Christ hath told them, Job. 10. 28. They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand; his Father which bath given them to him is greater than all, none is able to pluck them out of his band. What ground then is there of sear? when we are secured by all the great attributes of God, his Power, his Love, his Truth, his Faithfulness! by the arm of the Father, the Almighty Father, and by the arm of the Son to whom all power is given both in Heaven and in Earth. Lift up your heads then, O you Redeemed ones! say not we shall die, when God hath said you shall stand, and if you fall, yet you shall rise.

I shall close this discourse with a double Exhortation; both in Exhor.

the words of the Apostle:

1. Strive to make your calling and election Jure, 2 Pet. 1.

. Let him that thinketh he flandeth take beed left be fall. That

is the Apostles also, I Cor. 10. 12.

1. You cannot but conclude from hence, how highly we fland all concerned to make our particular calling and election fure. The foundation of God flandeth fure, the Lord knoweth who are his; but it is one thing to have our election fire in itself, another thing to have it fure to us;and indeed we cannot be fure of our election, without having some certainty of our calling. It is little comfort to any of us to know that the union of the Soul with Christ, shall abide until the day break, and the shadows flee away, if we do not know, that our Souls are within the bond of this Union. Let this therefore be our bufiness to find out fuch marks as we may trust to, by which we may know that Christ is ours, and we are bis. Now what thefe are I have had occasion once and again to touch upon in this discourse. I have told you before, that if you can truly call Christ your Beloved you may know he is yours. No man loves Christ in truth, but he who hath talted of the special love of Chrift; he loves us before we love him. I have told you what the Apostle determines that If a man bath not the Spirit of Christ be w none of big I have told you again that the Apolile determineth. That if a man be in Chrift be is a new creetme! I have further told you that you cannot fay, Christis yours, till you can fay, I ambis. His by a voluntary beart-refignation, till you have with purpose of heart given V V V 2

given up yourselves to the Lord : His, 2. By ordinary affinal Obeledience. Now let me inlarge a word or two upon the latter. Obedience, actual Obedience, lies either, 1. In the performance of duty. Or. 2. In declining and mortifying fin, here's the difficulty. in regard Hypocrites may decline and abhor fome fin, and may do some duty as Herod did many things, from what degree in either of thefe, a Soul may conclude, and fet it felf at reft. It is a large theme, I must not in the close of a discourse undertake to fpeak to it in the compass. But in a word, if a Christian findeth fuch a change in his heart, as that he maketh Confcience of impart duties as well as others, (by inward duties, I mean the fecret workings of his heart in prayers, praifes, meditations, &c. of all duties as well as fome duties.) Secret duties as well as those more publick duties towards men, as well as towards God, and of all duties of each fort. If he finds that he loves duty, and that for its own fake as it is duty, as it is an act of Homage and Obedience to God; and an expression of his gratitude to God, that the love of God confirmingth him to it, and in it. If he finds his heart Spiritual, and striving after communion with God in duty, to fee the Lords power and glay, the Lords face in his Ordinances, and that his Soul is low and humble in the highest and best of his performances; that he rifeth up from the best of them, crying out, not unto me O Lard, not unto me but to thy name be given the Glory. I fee no reason but he may conclude Christ is his stell and blood revealeth no fuch things unto men. 2. As to that part of actual Obedience which concerns the declining and avoiding of fin: If he finds that in the ordinary temper of his heart, he losthe, and bates, and foor fin, and that in the Ordinary course of his life, he turns away his feet, and bands, and ears, and ever from it; that this betred and ob borrence, and fear of his heart, and this indeavour of his life is against the leasts fins ; against the appearances of evil, against those fine which natural conflitution or education, or custome, bath made most properly his. If it be not only against open and scandalous fins, but fecret fins, when no eyes but Gods can fee him, and that the true purpose of his heart is against every false way. I fee no reason again, why a Christian should not hence comfortably conclude to himself, especially if he finds his Soul growing and increating in the love of duty, and in the hatred of fin ; I fav I know no reason, but this Soul may comfortably say, my Beloved is mine, and I am bis; and if he can conclude it. is fo ; he may conclude it Thall be for even for ever. But vet.

Secondly. You may eafily conclude from this discourse how much every Soul who thinketh he thus flandeth, is concerned to take heed left be (hould fall. It is the Arminisms great charge us on the Doctrine of the Saints perfeverance, That it discourageth the perfecting of holiness in the fear of the Lord; but the quite contrary is truth. Is it a discouragement think we to a Child to use its legs, for the Maid to say, Run, Run, I will hold you up, you shall not fall. That is our cafe. The Saint shall stand, but through the power of God, and in the use of such means as God hath appointed. It is not our priviledg, that do we little or nothing we shall yet hold out to the end, and be faved; but this is our priviledg, that in the use of the means which God hath appointed us, we shall hold out to the end, and be faved. The Apostle had faid, Rom. 4. As fin bath abounded, so grace shall much more abound , he presently conceived what some might fav, when we move fin that Grace may abound a but heweth no fuch conclusion could be made from his premiffes, Chap. 6. 2. God forbid (Saith he) how fall we that ore dead to fin, live any longer therein ? Vain men hear that the Saints thall perfevere, well then fay they ; They may live as they lift, yet they shall hold out? But how doth this follow from the excellent Doctrine? The Rightens shall bold on, but it must be in his may , they of clear hands thall grow Bronger and Bronger, but they must keep their bands clean: You will fay, but can they do otherwifer Laniwer, with respect to their own power they may do otherwise, and are very prone to do otherwife, indeed with respect to Gods ardination and in regard of Gods promise they cannot deother wife : but the decrees of God respect the use of the means as well as the obtaining of the end, and all know, that the fulfilling of promifes as well with reference to this life as to a better, requires our doing our duty, as a mean in order to the performance (on Gods part) of the thing that is promifed. There is therefore a Room left to work out our Salvation with fear and trembling; yea without it we cannot fo much as hopefor perseverance. Do you ask me what should a Christian do that he may persevere, that his Beloved may be his, and he his Beloveds, until the day break and the shadows flee away. This again were a great theme, should I discourse it in the full compass of it ; but I must not do it, it is time to shut up this discourse.

The finfulness of fin, as it is of all evils the greater, is a Subject worthy the thoughts of every Christian: every day, study the contrariety of it to the purity and Holiness of God, the vanity and vileness it in it self.

2. Labour to improve in the love of God and his way. 'Tis the Hypocrites receiving the Truth not in the love of it, that betrays him to Apoltafy; fatisfie not thy felf in walking in the ways of God, without feeing the beauty and excellency of them, and how eligible they are for themselves.

3. Keep close to God in Ordinances. There's little hope of a Sculs perseverance that is weary of duties, and begins to be slack and careless, and persunctory in the personnance of them; the

Saints flourish in the Course of their God.

4. Keep your judgments found in the truths of God, those who make thip-wrack of their faith, will quickly make havock of a good Conference.

5. Take beed of loofe company. The ordinary companion of fools will quickly be like them, and shall be destroyed with them.

6. Often fet before your eyes, the dreadful Examples of Apollates, and the dreadful threatnings in the word of God against them. They had better never known the way of God, saith Peter, they that draw back Gods Soul can take no pleasure in them, they are not fit for the Kingdom of God. There remaineth no more Sacrifice for fin, Heb. 10, they draw back to perdition.

7. Lastly, To name no more confider the promises made to Perseverance, and those mode for perseverance, and the shortness of the race we have to run; the shortness of the time we have to watch. But I shall add no more, and having named those only, leave them to

know, that the fulfilling of promites as well with reforence !

The Chine the include a found of equivalent region of the content of mineral such from the first such first such from the firs

litefas or a boner, requires our defag, for dory, selto the perferance or no Oods pare of Arronaga

by I sand hor do it, is time to hop our his cities

be improved in your more private Meditations.

See to the second second second

Cant. 2. 17.

Turn my Beloved, and be thou like as a Roe, and as a young Hart, upon the Mountains of Bether.

THE Spouse hath declared her faith, both with reference to the time present. So the had faid, I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine; and with reference to the time to come, that it fhould be fo, until the day break and the shadows should flee away ; we are now come to her prayer, turn (my Beloved!) and be like as a Roe and a young Hart upon the Mountains of Bether : Locus bie difficillimus. It is a very difficult Text (faith a learned Author.) I must therefore spend a little time in the explication of the words. Much of the difficulty lies in the word. Turn. The learned Mercer agreeing it the voice of the Spoule, makes it her request, that Christ would betake bimfelf to the Mountains ; Tete in eos recipe. So indeed it foundeth, Cap. 8: v. 14. But there it is, flee or make bafte, here 35, and so by the Mountains of Bether, some understand, Heaven, some Gospel Ordinances; from which, and by which the Church or the believing Soul defires to be fed, until the day of Judgment. But the generality of Interpreters expound it, of the Spouses prayer, that her beloved would return, not from her but to her; and in that fenfe I shall carry it, not as the Churches defire of Christs ascension into Heaven, and feeding her from thence until the day of Judgment; but as the delire of the Church, and the believing Soul, that her Beloved, of whom the had not at present as full fruition as the defired would return unto her, and be unto her in this, life as Roe, and as a young Hart, Lin quet non adelle quem revocat faith Bernard ; the calls to him to return, 'its plain then he was not present: yet (faith he) Cum fentit gratiam agnoscit presentiam, cum non absentiam queritur, rurfis presentiam querit. She feels his grace, and acknowledgeth his presence; she complains not of his absence, yet she desireth his presence. There are degrees of Christs presence with us every degree hath a great amiableness, and is therefore desirable. She defireth, faith Beza, that no difficulty might hinder her the foll enjoyment of her Beloved. The only remaining difficulty, is in the Metaphorical MOTH ST

Prop.

Metaphorical expressions, like as a Roe and a young Hare; and in that term, the Mountains of Betber: for the first I shall open it in the Explication of the Doctrine. About the latter I shall add

fomething.

Some make these the same with the Mountains of Spices mentioned Chap. 8. 14. but that is a great incertainty. Some think these were some Mountains belonging to Judea not now known; others think they were the Mountains beyond Fordan, mentioned 2 Sam. 2, 29. called there Bithron : Others read it Betbel, fo the Spanish and Contemplatensian Bibles, and divers of the Ancients, amongst which Bernard and Ambrofe, the letters ' and " being fo much alike might cause this divertity; but Betber is most generally owned as the trueft reading; it is like the reading of it. Betbel. might be the foundation of some Interpreters expoundingfit concerning Ordinances, with which the Church defires to be fed until the day of Judgment. Some make it an appellative word. The word to fignifying division and separation; and so some read it the Mountains of division or Separation. Probably Bithron had its name from the separation or division which forden made between some of the tribes of Ifrael. The probablett fense of the Text feems to be : That it is a paffinnate defire, or prayer of the Church, or the beheving Soul that Christ would return unto it in the gradual manifestations of his love, and while it continued in any state of separation from bim, be would be unto it as the Roe, and the young Hart upon the Mountains, pleafant and refreshing, and bastning bis prefence. Take the Doarine thus:

The Sponfe of Christ under any degree of his absence from her, will be earnestly desirous of his return unto her, as a Roe, and a young Hart

upon the Mountains of Bether.

You will (I truft) remember that in all my discourses by the Spouse I have understood, either the Church or the individual believing Stal. Now in the handling of this Proposition, I will enquire.

1. In what soufe, and to what degrees Christ may be absent from

this Sponfe.

2. I will show you that this Spoufe bath always been so far imposions of this absence, as to be always full of prayer, and earnest desires for his return to it; and that as a Roe, or a young Hart on the Mountains.

3. I will give you some reasons of it, and why necessarily this passion

passion as it hath been always found, so it will be always found in the Spoule of Christ.

4. Laftly, I will make some practical Application of the di-Courfe.

The two first I will in my discourse handle together.

How and to what degrees may Christ be absent from his 1. Qu.

Spoule?

That Christ is never wholly absent from his Church, or from the truly believing Soul, is out of doubt; while he hath a body in the world, while he hath members, he is and must be their head, and proporitonably influence them. I will (faith he, Matt. 28. 20.) be with you to the end of the world and where two of three are gathered together in his name, he must (for the accomplishment of his promise Matt. 18.) be in the midft amongst them. Ner could he possibly be wholly absent from the believing Soul, without the dinolation of the conjugal Union ; but yet if he were never absent to fome degrees, the never could fav unto him return; nor is this the only Text of Scripture where we have her thus Praying, Pfal. 6. 4. Pfal. 80. 14. Pfal. 90. 13, and in other places you will find David, and other of the Servants of God, putting up this Prayer.

Let me therefore open this a little to you.

1. As to his corporeal presence, so he is absent indeed: thus he was never present, (at least not for any stated time,) but whiles he fojourned in our flesh, both before that time and ever fince : those who are present in the flesh, must be in this sense (to use the Apostles phrase) absent from the Lord : there will indeed come another time, when we shall be taken up to meet the Lord in the Air, and shall ever be with the Lord. But thus he was absent from his Spoule until he came in the flesh ; and thus he bath been absent ever fince he ascended up into Heaven, yea, and shall be abfent ; for it is written Acts 3.21. Him the beavens muft receive until the time of the restitution of all things: and therefore we are warned, that if in the mean time any should come and say, Lo bere is Christ, or Lo there is Christ, we should not believe him. But as before Christs coming in the flesh, the Church and particular believing Souls discovered their impatience of his absence by many fer- Luke r. s. vent defires for his coming : Simeon and Hannah swere waiting for the confelation of Ifrael, and the Church along time before was praying. Ob that thou wouldst rend the beavent and some down! and many a paffage is there in this Song, wherein the Church is con-XXX ceived

Matth-24-33.

Bev. 22. 20.

ceived praying for Christs manifestation in the flesh. So now that Christ is ascended, we are taught to pray; Even so, Come Lord Jesus.

2. Chriff may be abfent from bis Church and from particular per-Sons, as to more outward grateful providences. In this sense the Prophet of old told the people the Lord would be with them while they were with him. And the Angel told Gideon, the Lord is with thee, O thou mighty man of Valour; he replies, if the Lord be with us, why are we thus? Thus the Church complains Pfalm 44. 9. Thou baft caft us off and put us to fame; thou goeft not out with our Armies. Elay 2. 6. Thou baft for faken, thy people, the boule of Facob; and fo in many Scriptures this indeed is the lowest degree of Gods prefence with a people or a perfon; but yet it is fuch as they are not patient of, but are very earnest with God for a return as to this degree of his prefence. Pfalm 22. 1. My God! my God! why baft thou for faken me ? why art thou to far from believe me? How troubled were the people of God in the old Testament when Ifrael turned their back before their Enemies? We have experience every day how diffatisfied the people of God under the frowns of his Providence.

3. Christ may be gradually absent from his people as to spiritual influences, and this either with respect to the body of his Church: Or

with respect to the particular Souls of bis Saints.

1. With respect to the body of bis Church; and this is not only,
1. when they want his Ordinances in whole or in part: The Pfalmist crieth out, Pfal-74.1. O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever?
Ver. o. We see not our figns, there is no more any Prophet: But.

2. When they see not the power and glory of God in his Ordinances: That the Ordinances seem dead Ordinances, or worse, such as Isaiab's preaching, Esay 6, 10. That men hear indeed, but understand not; they see indeed but perceive not; their heart is made sat, and their ears heavy, and their eyes are sout, (blinded with the light,) this is a dreadful Dispensation; and the people of God were always troubled for want of this presence: witness the complaining of the Prophet Esaiah; that he laboured in vain, and spont his strength for nothing and in vain. His crying out, Esay 6, 11. O Lord! How long?

2. Secondly with respect to the individual Souls of Believers: These he is one with, they dwell in him, and he in them, and this Union is inseparable, but yet there may be a gradual absence of Christ from them, I say, gradual; and this respects a threefold

influence

influence which Christ hath upon their Souls, strengthening,

quickening and comforting.

1. Strengthening, or inabling to spiritual duty. In him is our strength found, and without him we can do nothing. A Christian will upon experience find that he hath not always alike ability to resist a Temptation, to tread upon the neck of a Corruption, nor to perform those acts of Worship, which at other timeshe hath done; and when this is in any eminent degree, and for some time, a Christian may conclude some gradual withdrawings of those influences of Grace which held him up in those duties: But every sincere and watchful Christian will observe these decayes, and be sensible that it is not with them as at other times, and will speak in the language of the Spouse here; Turn my Beloved! Thus David cryed out in Psalm 119.28. Strengthen me according to the Word. So Psalm 80.16. O turn unto me and have mercy upon me!

give thy frength unto thy fervant.

2. Quickening; Thefe are those influences of Grace which put upon the Soul a freedom, chearfulnels and livelinels in the performance of its duty, in opposition to that dulness and deadness, and heaviness of Spirit which the best of Gods people find oft-times in their fpiritual Services. There's nothing more evident in the experiences of Christians, than the difference which upon this account they often find in their own Souls, which though oft-times it be caused from natural causes, yet when it is so, the hand of God is to be feen in it in the ordering of those causes which naturally produce such an effect, and often is when no natural cause is discerned: but as an honest heart will be sensible of this, so it will be diffatisfied under it; and as to this also cry out, Turn my Beloved. How often do you meet with that Prayer in that admirable 119. Pfalm, Quicken thou me according to thy word in thy way, in thy righteonfness, after thy loving-kindness, according to thy judgments . Ver. 25, 37, 40, &c. And though fome of them may be interpreted of a reviving from a flate of Affliction, yet they have a further Latitude; and that phrase, quicken me in thy way, feems to have a particular reference to what I am speaking of. But the experience of every Christian is sufficient proof in this case.

Lastly, As to the influences of Comfort. It is true too, A gracious Soul may lose its peace, and not have always the same joy and satisfaction in it self; though it is always at peace with God, it is not always at peace with it self: But as to this when it finds it, it will alfo cry out, Turn my Beloved. David cryeth out, Pfalm 119. 82. When wilt thou comfort me? But I will dwell no longer upon

so plain and evident a Subject.

I have one thing yet further to open. I told you the Spoule cannot be sensible of the least withdrawing of her Beloved from her; but she would importune his Return, and that he would come like a Roe, and a young Heart: How? And why like a Roe, and a young Hart?

I find Bernard hinting a Sense, in which I find sew following, in the shape and form of a man: but this depends upon the Notion I hinted before of some, as if this were the Churches Prayer for the Lords hastning of his last coming; when Ad. 1.11. He shall so come in like manner on be ascended up into Heaven: But I have delivered my opinion of the sense of the Text otherwise.

Nyssen says, as a Roe and a young Hirt, devouring all the noxious Serpents as be comes; but whether those beasts have such a quality is unknown to us: five things may possibly be more proper to

open the Metaphorical exprettion.

formetimes threatens to come to his people as a Lion, Hof. 5. 14. Sometimes as a Bear, a Bear rob'd of her Whelps, to devour and tear; in opposition to such a coming, which their fins might have deserved at her Reloveds hands: the prays that he would be as a Roe, and as a young Hore that comes not to do harm to any: the defires her Lord would come peaceably to her. It was a form of Salutation the Jewi had, Comest thou peaceably? I Sam. 16. 4.

I Kings 2. 13. The gracious Soul desires the presence of Christ, but the desireth he might come peaceably, not like a Lion; the is not able to encounter him, but like a Roe or a young Hart.

2. Secondly, The Roe and the young Hart's motion is a pleafont motion. The Roe is a pleafant creature like the pleafant Roe, Prov. 5. 19. Pleafant in its motion, leaping upon the Mountains and skipping upon the Hills, as we had it ver. 8. of this Chapter. Such are the gracious returns of Christ to his Church, and to the Souls of his people: they are exceeding pleafant, and such the Spoule desires they should be; that the motions of her Beloved to her Soul might be as pleafant as the motions of Roes and Harts upon the Mountains were to her eyes, Intree quast binnatus stiens, —Intree pacificus, intree jucandus, & bilaris. Intree quast descendens de moutibus Bether settions & spendidus, saith Bernard.

3. Thirdly,

3. Thirdly, The motion of a Roe and a young Hart is a most swift motion, Prov. 615. Deliver thy self as a Roe from the hands of the Hunter: Asabel was swift of foot as a wild Roe. The Spouse defires that her Beloved would come as a young Roe, that is, velocissime most swiftly, as Sandius interpreteth it. So Mr. Ainsworth and Delrio, &cc. Surely, I come quickly, (saith Christ.) The Spouse answereth, Even so, come Lord Jesus; not only, Come Lord Jesus, but even so come Lord Jesus; the desires his quick and speedy coming. Hope deserted makes the heart sick, the Soul still of Love is impatient of delay. The Soul in all cases of Desertion is looking out at the windows of Faith and Hope, and crying with Sistera's Mother, Why is his Chariot so long a coming? But thou, O Lord, how long (saith David.) Psalm 6.3. So Psalm 13.1, 2. Psalm 35.17. Psal.79.5. Psal.90.15. Return, O Lord, how long?

4. Fourthly, By this exprellion, the deprecates the impediment of all difficulties, as the heighth of the Mountains, and the depths of the Valleys are no Remoraes at all to the Roes and young Hirts : They come, as we heard it, ver. 8. leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the bills: So the Spoule defires, that there might be nothing might hinder the fruition of her Beloved. Thus Bezz interpreteth it, Exoptat me nulls prorfus difficultas adventum fponfi remoretur. He thinks this Verle well interpreted by that Elay 64. 1. That God would rend the beavens and come down, and the mounvains might flow down at his prefence; That the distance betwint Heaven and Earth; (fo some interpret it) might be nothing; that her own fins might be nothing, (fo others interpret it.) In thort. That nothing might fland in the way of her full enjoyment of her Beloved, more than a Rock or a Mountain can fland in the way of a Roe or a young Hart which leaps upon the one, and skips upon the other. Shall I add one thing more?"

5. I shall borrow my soundation from ser. 9. of this Chapter, where she had said, My Beloved is like a Roe, and a young Harr. There she had said, he was like a Roe and like a young Harr. Here she prays he would be like a Roe and a young Harr: what is this but that he would be like bimself, and come like bimself to ber? God sometimes comes to his people in an assumed, borrowed shape: so he comes as a Lion, as a Bear, as a Manb. When he comes to execute Judgment, he calls Judgment his mark, but his strange-work; his work which he never proceedeth to, but as it were necessitated for the honour of his Justice when the Sins

of People enforce him to it : but works of mercy are his own . his proper work, there he appears like himfelf. The Spoule begs her Beloved would return to her as a Jefus, as a Saviour, as a Chrift : Not as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, but as the Lamb of God that taketh away the fins of the World : not as the Son of God when he is angry, though it be a little, but as the Son of God become the Son of man, and God is in him reconciling the world to bimfelf, not imputing their fins ; Turning away his eyes from the transgreihons of his people, and opening the arms of his grace. and love to receive Sinners running in unto him, and laying hold upon him, and graciously accepting Souls. But I have enlarged enough in the Explication of the Doctrine, with which you fee I have also joyned the proof, as to the it that it is so. Let me now come to shew you the reasons of it, by which you will see it cannot be but the must desire such a return of her Beloved to her.

I. Reaf.

. Because Christ cannot be withdrawn and absent from the believing Soul, but it presently suspecieth some Mountain of Betber; Some Mountain of Separation, of its own throwing up. It is a very hard thing to perswade an Atheistical wretch, that any judgment comes upon him for fin; no, if Ananias and Saphire drop down dead upon their telling a lie, if the Earth opens its mouth and swalloweth up Corab, Dathan and Abiram ; yet it is with them, but all things fall alike to all men, The wife man and the fool die both alike. On the other fide, it is very hard to perswade the Child of God upon any from of Providence, that it is for any other cause but for fin, for the punishment of some great miscarriage; hence sometimes it is as much troubled to find out the Achan, as it is to bear Gods afflictive dispensation: hence while the absence of God continues, it concludeth the guilt of its lin also continuing, and hence no wonder at all if it be importunate for Christs returns to it. from which it concludeth, its peace again made with God. It is true, this may be a mistake in the believers Soul: Forte ideo fubtraxit fe quo avidius repocaretur, teneretur fortius (faith Bernard on this Text.) Praterieus teneri vult, abiens revocari: perhaps he therewith withdrew himfelf, that he might call more earnefily after him. and told him more fast when the again recovered him. I will, faith God by the Prophet Hofea, return to my place, that they may acknowledg their effences and feek my face, In their affliction they will feek me early; but though it be fo, yet this is hard for a jealous Christian to understand.

Hof. 5. 15.

understand and to distinguish betwixt trials and ebastifements or punishments for fin. So as there is the fame reason to be affigued for the Souls passionate desire of Christs return to it after any withdrawings, as there is for it to defire any token for good, any hope, or lense for the pardon of its fins; for it looketh upon these withdeavings as tokens of divine displeasure, and suspicious signs at least of some iniquity not forgiven to it.

A Second Reason of it may be the great evil and forem which 2. Reas. naturally followeth all such withdrawings of Christ from a Soul. This is more or less according to the kind and degree of such withdrawing; the lowest degree of which is that, relating to the influences of his common Providences yet there follows enough of outward forrow and affliction upon this, when God had but thus cast off the Church of the Jems, there were perpetual defolations, the Enemy did very wickedly in the Sandhary, fire was caft in- Plalm 74: to the Sanctuary, the Synagognes of God were burnt up, they fow not their figns, &c. So it is to a fingle person, when the Lord hath but thus far withdrawn himfelf. What follows, but wasting in the estate, diseases in the body, crosses in the managery of our affairs in the world? But now when Gods prefence is withdrawn from the inward man, whether in the influences of frengthening, quickening, or comforting grace, what followeth, but that wounded Spirit, which Solomon tells us none can bear, that forrow which he speaks of, which makes the beart to stoop? Now this is but natural to us, being preffed with grief and forrow to defire relief, and therefore the earneftly defires the return of her Beloved, according to the kind and degree of his departing from her, he being he who bath forn and who alone can beat ber ; who hath fmitten, and who alone can bind her up, and revive her as the Church speaks, Hofea 6. 1, 2.

A Third Reason may be drawn from the full fatisfaction which 3. Reast. the Spoufe bath in the prefence of ber Beloved with ber. I shall be fatisfied with thy likenefs, (faith David.) In his prefence is joy, and a fulness of joy (faith he.) Neque enim subducto fibi tam dulci Spon-To fibi interim aliquid aliud non dico defiderare, fed nedum cogitare libebit, (faith Bernard :) So fweet a Beloved being (faith he) withdrawn from her, the was to far from not defiring that the could think of nothing elfe. Every believing Soul being fufficiently poffeffed that Christ is the greatest good cannot but thirst after the fullest enjoyments of him, and understand how much her hap-

pines

piness is concerned in such enjoyment; and therefore upon the least sense or suspicion of such withdrawings, cannot but with

Some passion cry out turn my Beloved ! 4. Reaf.

Laftly, Every Soul naturally defires a perfection of fate; hence the Schoolmen argue the incomplearness even of Fuft Souls, made as perfect as they can be before the day of Judgment, because in all fuch Souls there must remain a defire of a re-union to the body. when both thall be made perfect in the full fruition of God to all Eternity. Now the perfection of the Souls felicity lieth much in her Beloved's full presence. We shall not be made perfect till he return from Heaven, whither he is afoended. Nor is it possible that without his gracious presence and influence, the Soul should be perfect either in its action and performance for him, or in its enjoyment and fruition of him. But I shall enlarge no further, but close up my discourse for this time, and upon this Chapter, with two particulars of practical Application.

What you have heard; may fhew you that vall difference which is betwixt a believing and another Soul. 1. The believing Soul will be fensible of the least degrees of Christs absence to it. 2. It will be very fervent and importunate in prayer for bis return unto it ; yea, for his most speedy return to it. Ah Lord! how many thousands of Souls are there in the World that neither do enjoy, nor ever did enjoy any thing of Christs spiritual presence, yet have no sense at all of it! The Apostle setting out the desperate condition of the Epbefians while they were in the state of Nature Ephef 2.12. faith of them. That at that time they were without Chrift --- baving no hope, and without a God in the world! Is not this the flate of fome Souls before the Lord this day? Is there none here that never knew what it was to be united to Christ, or to have any thing of his presence, and are you not sensible of it? Shall the believing Soul be sensible of an heart not so strong to duty as at other times? and have you no fenfe of your heart wholly estranged from duty? wholly dead unto duty, &c? Shall they be fensible of a dulness and deadness of their heart unto spiritual duty? and have you no fense of a total want of heart unto duty? Are they fensible of the relapses of their Soul into fin for want of the presence of their Beloved? and will not you be fenfible of your Souls dead in trefpaffes and fins? The Apostle speaks of some, Epbef. 4. 19. being past feeling have given themselves to lastivious nels, to work uncleanness with greediness: but what can be expected of dead Souls,

1. V/c.

but that they should be past feeling? all fense is the effect of life : how can it be expected, that those who know nothing of Christ and of the sweetness of his presence, should defire it any more than the Gadarens defired his prefence? When he was upon the Earth .- Ignoti nulla enpido. The Soul must have some knowledg of the good and excellency of the thing, or person which it delireth. I cannot speak to your hearts. I cannot breath the breath of Spiritual life into your Souls, that is Gods work. But let me speak to your ears a little : O do not think the Spoule of Christ as a vain woman. Do you fee fometime ! gracious Souls in their hours of trouble? Do you fee them mourning, and refufing to be comforted? and do you hear them faying, where is our God become? Oh, I am afraid, Christ is departed from me; I am so afflicted, so diffressed, so full of fightings without, and of fears within : Oh, I cannot pray as at other times, my God is departed from me! Ah my heart is dead and dull, and fad, and every way out of tune ; O turn, O turn my Beloved ! be thou unto me like a Roe and a young Hart upon the mountains of Betber : my fins have made a mountain of Bether, a mountain of Separation between Christ and me. But, O my Beloved, be thou like a Roe and a young Hart to whom no Mountains are unpaffable. O do not think your Brethren are fools, and that they complain for they know not what ! Say rather, Omy Soul! Have I not much more cause to cry so? I that never knew any thing of Chrift, that never could fay unto him my Beloved; Surely (Brethren) Religion is not a vain thing. O what a difference there is betwixt a child of God and you! Consider on whose side the Advantage lies. Christ is gone from us all, he will return again. O take heed he returneth not to you as the Lion of the Tribe of Judab; as the Apostle describes him, coming in flaming fire to take vengeance upon them that know not God. and obey not the Gofpel of Christ, 2 Theff. 1. Oh, it will be sweet that day to fee him coming I ke a Roe and a young Hart upon the Mountains of Besher. I have done with one word more.

Secondly, Let all that fear the Lord learn bow much it is their concern to keep the prefence of Christ with them; and 2. what their

duty is under bis withdrawings from them : I fay,

1. First, How much it is your concern to preserve the presence of Christ with you: Why should you put your selves to that trouble that will follow every gradual withdrawing of him from your Souls? O look to the presence of Christ with your Souls! 1. Reep

Yyy

your

your lists and corruptions under; these, these, are those things which alone stir up and awake this Beloved; These make him say, I will return and go to my place, until they acknowledg their offences. Sin disquiets your Lord in Heaven; I will go down (saith God concerning Sodom,) and see if it be altogether unto the Cry:

1. It grieves that holy Spirit by which you are sealed. 2. Keep up your Graces in their Exercises: Faith lays hold upon him, Prayer pleafeth him, and calleth him back again; Keep your heart waking, let him have the imbraces of your Love; let every Grace act its part:

2. But if you have flipt, and he hath withdrawn himself from you, yet learn your dury from the Spouse here, cry after him that is out of your fight, your Prayers will reach him whom your Eye of sense cannot. Say, and never leave saying with the Spouse, Turn my Beloved, and be thou unto me as a Roe, or as a young Hart upon the Mauntains of Bether, until you can say as she said, Ver. 8. The Voice of my Beloved; behold be cameth leaping upon the Mountains, and skipping upon the Hills.

D: 0 : M. Gloria.

whom no Montains are in **8.7 M. 1 (4**de not cladby not utilize

Reader,

THE Authors absence at a great distance from the Press, hath caused more Errata's than possibly had be been present, he had let pass: yet had be been present he could not have promised not to have a ver-looked some, n bich he may have done also in this Table: tesser faults, in misplacing stops, repetition of some little particles, literal mistakes, oc. he hath left to thy charity; what may most trouble the sense, he here desires there to correct.

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